GODARD ON GODARD

Critical writings by Jean-Luc Godard
edited by Jean Narboni and Tom Milne
with an introduction by Richard Roud

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Filming *Anticipation*: Jean-Luc Godard with Anna Karina

Introduction

by Richard Roud

It is pretty hard to believe that fifteen years have passed since those days when, in a vain attempt to forestall foreclosure, a French weekly paper called *Arts-Spectacles* decided to jazz up its cinema pages by bringing in a squad of young Turks from *Les Cahiers du Cinéma*. *Cahiers* then was not as much read as it was to be later, and the appearance of its most revolutionary stars – François Truffaut and Jean-Luc Godard – in the more popular weekly did in fact liven up that moribund publication. What's more, it brought the *Cahiers* critics out of the cloister and did much to lead the way for the success of the New Wave operation a year or two later.

It would be nice to be able to say that one had instantly recognized that Godard was the most significant critic of his generation, and that he was bound to go on to become its most important director. Alas, no: one couldn't see then where his theorizing was leading or even, in fact, if it was leading anywhere at all. For those first pieces were by and large so confused and badly organized that the very act of translating them is a task of monstrous dimensions.

Furthermore, Godard was above all a polemical critic. He was unkind, unfair, unreasonable. In fact, like many of the other critics of the *Cahiers* school he has perhaps not always believed every word he wrote – in our eyes, the cardinal sin. And yet one can say now that this kind of cavalier criticism, as obscure as it was outrageous, has done more for the cinema than all our careful weighing of the evidence, our scruples, above all, our attempted

fairness. It is easy to be fair when the stakes aren't too high: for Godard, they were; his criticism was nothing less than a preparation – both on his part and on ours – for a body of films he was soon to begin making. Furthermore, he was really on the outside, not only of the standard weekly and daily reviewers, but even outside the anti-Establishment orthodoxy as represented by Bazin. Like Rivette, Rohmer, and Chabrol, he had belonged to the aesthetic left wing of the outsiders ever since that first important article in *Cahiers* in 1956, 'Montage my fine care', in which he took a position almost diametrically opposed to that of André Bazin.

All this should be borne in mind when reading the early, more annoying essays in this book. But not only do the later ones justify the first, the whole body of his criticism was retroactively to be validated by the films Godard made. When in 'Montage my fine care', he wrote 'Cutting a camera movement in four may prove more effective than keeping it as shot', one might have thought he was being merely perverse. When later, in *Vivre sa Vie*, he actually broke up a tracking shot of a bar with bursts of machine-gun fire, one saw what he meant, and one saw the place of that seemingly offhand remark in Godard's aesthetic.

The same is true of Godard's early shorts. Leaving aside the first, completely impersonal one (*Opération Béton*), his second film *Une Femme Coquette* contains, one can see now, the seeds of much of his later work. But supposing one had seen it at the time it was made, in 1956? One could not have been sure whether the stylistic devices were valid, or simply proof that the director didn't know any better. Could one have been sure that the unmatched shots, the pleonastic use of dialogue, the false timing, the flash-shots had been done on purpose, as it were? Doubtful. And the same was true of many of the early essays which only took on their real meaning in the light of the films. And this brings us to a major consideration. It is only since the war that we have had the phenomenon of the critic-turned-cinéaste. Oh, there was the occasional exception, like Delluc before, as there are the exceptions since, like Resnais. But certainly in the past twenty years, it is hard to think of a new European director who has not come to the cinema either through criticism or the Cinémathèques.

There are, I think, two reasons for this significant development. The first is that all art, and not just the cinema, has for the past hundred years been involved with itself. In Sartre's words: 'Since Mallarmé, we have entered into a period in which art criticizes itself. Mallarmé defined his poetic epoch as "La Poésie Critique". Since then, most art and literature has done just that. For example, a sculptor – let's say Giacometti – tries to make a certain statue, not according to the usual recipes and principles, but by calling into question, in the very statue he makes, sculpture itself.'

In 1957, Godard said much the same thing on reviewing Renoir's *Eléna et les Hommes*, which he praised for being both 'Art and theory of art, at one and the same time; beauty and the secret of beauty; cinema, and apologia for cinema.'

Later, in 1962, after four feature films, he still was, he said, a critic, and in a sense, even more than before. 'Instead of writing criticism, I make a film, but the critical dimension is subsumed. I think of myself as an essayist, producing essays in novel form, or novels in essay form: only instead of writing, I film them.' Is, then, this new development of the critic/film-maker simply a counterpart of a general movement in the other arts? Not quite – for the new directors, as I said, have come to the cinema either through criticism or, equally as important, from the Cinémathèques. It is no accident that the most important film movement of the past fifteen years has come from Paris, home of the most prestigious of the Cinémathèques. (And no accident, perhaps, that Godard's early pseudonymous initials were H.L. – Hans Lucas, a Germanizing of Jean-Luc, but H.L. probably was also a bow to Henri Langlois.)

Some people maintain that an inordinate interest in the past on the part of an artist is a sure sign of decadence or impotence. Perhaps, but that particular phenomenon has been with us since the Renaissance. It seems to me that the significance of the development of the film libraries of the world in the past twenty years corresponds to a certain coming-of-age of the cinema. That is to say, it was not until Orson Welles that we find an important director who was born *after* the invention of the cinema. All the others had been born before it, had grown up with it. It was theirs, so to speak, and they knew its important films simply from having lived through those years going regularly to the cinema.

Welles, we are told by some accounts, ran through *Stagecoach* thirty-five times in preparation for *Citizen Kane*. Others maintain that he had a whole course in German Expressionist films. It's not important which story is true: both are believable, and that's the point. One couldn't imagine Griffith or Stroheim or Gance doing that – they wouldn't have to. Either they would have seen all these films already, or they wouldn't bother. Since Welles, however, since the war, the film libraries have flourished because the history of the cinema is no longer encompassed by the memory of the young film-maker. He now has got to do research. This is an important development. It means that a certain age of innocence is over; no one can ever again come to the cinema as Griffith did, or Ford. It also means that film-makers undergo the influence of other directors. It may be true that Eisenstein was influenced by Griffith, but they were *contemporaries*. Today, a Bertolucci tells us that he was influenced by von Sternberg in the lighting of *The Conformist*. Straub has been influenced by the Lubitsch films, Godard by Dreyer. These were not films they saw at their neighbourhood theatre – they were Archive films seen at Cinémathèques.

And once you start consciously seeing old films, you are automatically obliged to start building up theories – historical views, critical orthodoxies. Is not the *auteur* theory itself only an attempt at an indexing system, an attempt to bring some order to the enormous corpus of films?

This development, new in the cinema, has existed for longer in the other

arts. Since the Renaissance, many artists have consciously sought models in the past, just as film-makers are doing now. None, more than Godard. *Breathless* was an attempt to 'redo' *Scarface*; *Une Femme est une Femme* was a homage to the American musical; *Vivre sa Vie*, a tribute to Dreyer, and so forth. Even now, in his recent political phase, Godard has worked with the Dziga-Vertov group and the Medvedkin group – and who was Medvedkin? A Soviet film-maker of the 1920s occasionally shown at the Cinémathèque.

And that is why a careful reading of Godard's essays will not only give one the liveliest history of the cinema; it is also the best introduction to the films of Godard, and through them, to the cinema of today. It's all there – the gods: Hitchcock, Renoir, Rossellini, even, alas, Frank Tashlin; the *bêtes noires*: Ritt, Kramer, Marcel Camus, Dassin. Godard's essays are, like his films, a criticism of the cinema, a theory of the cinema; but, above all, they are diaries. Like the story by Borges that Godard likes so much:

'There once was a man who wanted to create a world: so he began by creating houses, provinces, valleys, rivers, tools, fish, lovers, etc., and at the end of his life, he noticed that this patiently elaborated labyrinth was nothing other than his own portrait.'

So, with Godard's essays: *Godard on Godard* is that portrait.

Early Texts: 1950–1952

Jean-Luc Godard was born on 3 December 1930, in Paris. After schooling in Nyon, Switzerland, between the ages of twenty and twenty-two he attended – more regularly than the Sorbonne, where he gained a Certificate in Ethnology – the Ciné-Club du Quartier Latin. There he met, among others, Eric Rohmer and Jacques Rivette, and with them founded La Gazette du Cinéma, *a monthly of which five issues were published (from May to November 1950), and which included several articles by him, signed either with his own name or the pseudonym Hans Lucas. In January 1952, he began writing for* Cahiers du Cinéma, *a periodical founded in April 1951 by Jacques Doniol-Valcroze, Lo Duca and Léonide Keigel. Godard also appeared as an actor in* Quadrille *(1950), a short film by Jacques Rivette, and in Eric Rohmer's* Présentation ou Charlotte et son Steack, *1951.*

This first section includes an article by Hans Lucas which appeared in the first issue of Amis du Cinéma *in October 1952, and an interview-encounter with Eric Rohmer (signed with the initials N.B.) which is somewhat reminiscent in its dry, laconic humour, and the tone of the final sentence, of the* Refugee Conversations *by Bertolt Brecht, a name which becomes increasingly important to Godard as the years go by.*

1: Joseph Mankiewicz

One day I went along to admire one of Ernst Lubitsch's last productions. It was *Dragonwyck*, a curious film in which characters from melodrama plagiarize themselves with (h)auteur and gesticulate with a solemnity equalled only on occasion by the severities of William Wyler. In France we have not yet seen *The Late George Apley* or *Escape*. But after *Somewhere in the Night*, the recent release in Paris of *The Ghost and Mrs Muir*, *A Letter to Three Wives* and *House of Strangers* suffices to establish Joseph Mankiewicz as one of the most brilliant of American directors. I have no hesitation in placing him on the same level of importance as that held by Alberto Moravia in European literature.

It is no accident, moreover, that this 'house of strangers' should house Italians. There is more than analogy here, even on the level of plot, with *Conjugal Love* and *Ambitions Deceived*. One can feel the same breath, the same infiltration of that magical sensibility which Jean Grenier called 'mediterranean'.

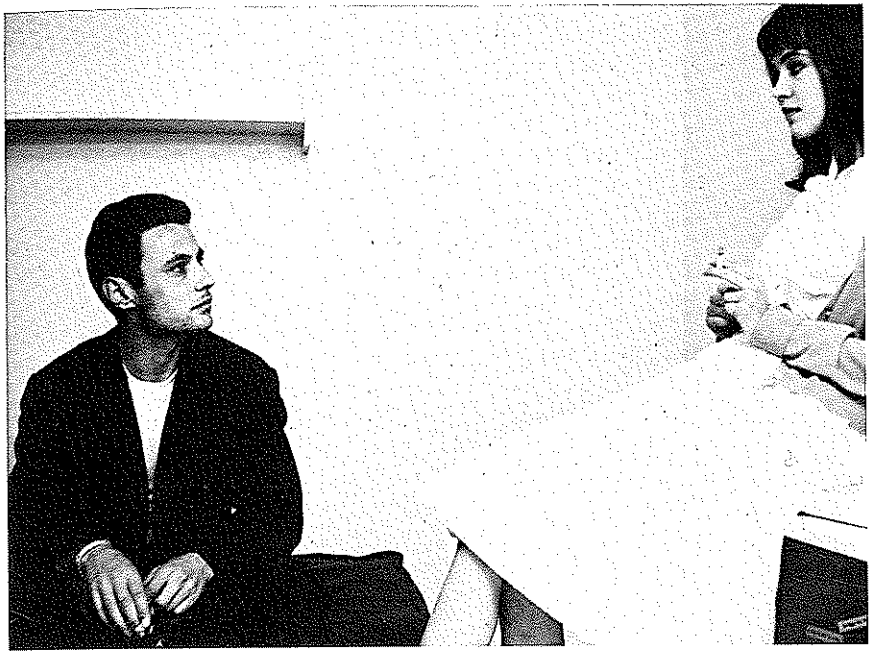
The charmingly old-fashioned *Ghost and Mrs Muir* presents the same dramatic texture as *Conjugal Love*. Mankiewicz's films are always about marriage anyway, but they take the form of broken trysts. Here, in order to love her ghost, a young woman, the young widow played by Gene Tierney,

House of Strangers: Richard Conte and Susan Hayward

must first write a book. The success of the book is bound up with the success of her love. It all ends so wonderfully well that we end up by believing in ghosts.

'One can judge a woman's past by her presents', Mankiewicz once said: his letter to three married women is also three letters to one woman, probably one loved by the author. The plot complications come easily, since the issue is dependent not only on the writing but on the reading of several letters. Moreover these dangerous liaisons[1] revealing strange relationships are echoed by the success of the film itself, and of the author, with regard to the eternal female whose charming and invisible presence is adumbrated in the script. Full of childish whims – Linda Darnell, always a perfect doll – and perfidies, this is doubtless the first film told in letter form. So Mankiewicz rediscovers the inner purpose of the epistolary form, which is that the author should receive news of characters dear to him.[2]

With *House of Strangers*, Mankiewicz's garden fills with brutal strangers who force him to a strict narrative objectivity. Unlike Moravia's characters, for whom success is always sealed by deception, Mankiewicz's characters are ambitious people who, through deception, end up by succeeding, and lovers who through divorce end up by marrying. Two scenes are explicit from this point of view: Susan Hayward feverishly awaits a telephone call from Richard Conte. Then she decides to wait no longer and goes out just as the



Le Petit Soldat: Michel Subor and Anna Karina

telephone rings. She closes the door, then reopens it and rushes to answer the telephone just as the ringing stops, only to start again a moment later. On another occasion, Richard Conte comes to Susan Hayward's apartment and asks her to go out. She refuses, and Conte is just settling down when Susan makes up her mind to go out. The repetition in failure engenders success, and the happy end seems like an inner concomitant of misfortune. Mankiewicz's marital chronicles offer romantic perspectives which are the exact reverse of Moravia's. But their characters reveal the same lack of 'grip on life', and one has the same sense of 'expected surprise' (Colette Audry).[3] Whereas with Moravia the success of the work depends on the failure of the characters, with Mankiewicz like acts on like, and the final success of the hero is attended by that of the film.

In addition, Mankiewicz is a remarkable director of actors. To be convinced of this, one need only have seen Richard Conte's previous films. It is not when left to his own devices that he seems an exceptional actor: sniffing a powder-puff, caressing a fur, the slightest gesture springs from a theatrical instinct for effect. Equally remarkable, too, are Edward G. Robinson's bath, the meal in his dining-room, and one of the finest flashbacks in the history of the cinema, the whole length of a staircase, accompanied by a theme from Rossini.

After several variations on the theme of violence, Richard Conte climbs

splendidly into Susan Hayward's car. So *House of Strangers* ends. News comes that Joseph is now telling us all about Eve.

Does Mankiewicz make films – as André Breton[4] writes books – only to arrange meetings?

2: Towards a Political Cinema

One afternoon towards the end of a Gaumont newsreel, my eyes widened in pleasure: the young German Communists were parading on the occasion of the May Day Rally. Space was suddenly lines of lips and bodies, time the rising of fists in the air. On the faces of these young Saint Sebastians one saw the smile which has haunted the faces of happiness from the archaic Kores down to the Soviet cinema. One felt for Siegfried the same love as that which bound him to Limoges.[1] Purely through the force of propaganda which animated them, these young people were beautiful. 'The beautiful bodies of twenty-year-olds which should go naked.'[2]

Yes, the great Soviet actors speak in the name of the Party, but like Hermione[3] of her longings and Lear of his madness. Their gestures are meaningful only in so far as they repeat some primordial action. Like Kierkegaard's ethician, a political cinema is always rooted in repetition: artistic creation simply repeats cosmogonic creation, being simply the double of history. The actor infallibly becomes what he once was, the priest. *The Fall of Berlin* and *The Battle of Stalingrad* are Masses for a consummation.

In relation to history, the Soviet actor interprets his role (his social character) in two ways: as saint, or as hero. Corresponding to these two basic agencies are two major currents in the Soviet cinema: the cinema of exhortation and the cinema of revolution, the static and the dynamic. 'In the former the expression outweighs the content, and in the latter the content outweighs the expression' (Marx). Whereas in *Michurin* or *The Rainbow* the plot takes first place and so articulates the movements of the characters, in *Zoya* and *Ivan the Terrible* 'the consciousness of self which transforms a class into a historical actor forms part of the revolutionary act. It engages itself in the drama of History through the spontaneous and passionate poetry of the event' (H. Rosenberg). And the reason I admire *The Young Guard* so deeply is that it oscillates between these two poles, a heart beating ceaselessly between the cult of the Absolute and the cult of Action. One remarkable shot sums up not only the aesthetic of Sergei Gerasimov (who tells his actors he will not be content unless he finds both Rastignac and Julien Sorel[4] in them) but perhaps of the whole Soviet cinema: a young girl in front of her door, in interminable silence, tries to suppress the tears which finally burst violently forth, a sudden apparition of life. Here the idea of a shot (doubtless not unconnected with the Soviet economy plans)[5] takes on its real function of sign, indicating something in whose place it appears. And it is curious that this sign acquires formal beauty only at the moment of its defeat:* the village fleeing before the invader, the arrival of the Germans,

* As Brice Parain notes: 'the sign forces us to see an object through its significance'.[6]

shown in a single shot with fantastic virtuosity, the death of the young people, intensified in effect by repeating the same camera movement five times. These moments are brief, but their very swiftness seems everlasting, 'as the child creates a world out of a single image'. (By what strange chance are these heroes in their darkest hours arrayed in the vestments of our childhood? Zoya barefoot in the snow, Ivan rolling at the feet of the Boyars, Maria Felix with revolver in hand to prevent the great sacrilege, the violation of this woman who is as much part of us as the earth.)

Aside from the Soviet cinema, there are few films revealing such deep political experience. No doubt only Russia feels at this moment that the images moving across its screens are those of its own destiny. (Another significant shot in *The Young Guard* shows a young girl unable to cry because she is a poor actress, but one look at her actress-comrades weeping for the sacred cause is enough to bring tears flooding to her cheeks.)

If one excepts the Giralducian *Kuhle Wampe* by Brecht and Dudow,

> (O dark young girl
> Why do you weep so
> A young officer in Hitler's guard
> Has ensnared my heart)

the Nazi propaganda film might be defined in these words by Georges Sorel:[7] 'an arrangement of images capable of provoking instinctive feelings corresponding to the manifestations of the war engaged . . . against modern society'. It is impossible to forget *Hitlerjunge Quex*, certain sequences from Leni Riefenstahl's films, some fantastic newsreels from the Occupation, the baleful ugliness of *Der Ewige Jude*. This was not the first time that art was born of coercion. The last few seconds of Fascist joy may be seen through the bewildered smile of a small boy (*Germany Year Zero*).[8]

The last shot of *Rio Escondido*: the face of Maria Felix, the face of a dead woman whom the voice of the President of the Mexican Republic covers with glory. In dealing constantly with birth and death, political cinema acknowledges the flesh, and metamorphoses the holy word without difficulty.

Unhappy film-makers of France who lack scenarios, how is it that you have not yet made films about the tax system, the death of Philippe Henriot,[9] the marvellous life of Danielle Casanova?[10]

3: *Que Viva Mexico!*

One might think that the cavalcade of film exposed by S. M. Eisenstein in Mexico had been pillaged often enough already, so that one could be left in peace to admire its dazzling remains. Now, however, the most complete version to date of *Que Viva Mexico!* is offered to us, edited by Mr Kenneth Anger, a young American who, not content with making films of unbelievable mediocrity, considers himself clever enough to cut together without

The Young Guard

Les Carabiniers: the execution of the partisan girl

rhyme or reason a work where all that was necessary was to put the pieces end to end.

It is a shame that the Cinémathèque Française did not publicly repudiate so contemptible a deed. (H.L.)

4: *Works of Calder* and *L'Histoire d'Agnès*

A young boy gazes at the sea, flowers and sand. Then he enters Calder's studio like Ali Baba discovering the thieves' treasure-trove. Childhood is the open sesame to the bouquet of mobiles.

Burgess Meredith's film not only bears the prestige of the most beautiful of beauties, but in passing defines the cinema, which consists simply of putting things in front of the camera. At the cinema we do not think, we are thought. A poet calls this the things' view of it. Not man's view of things, but the view of things themselves. *Works of Calder* is a propaganda film on behalf of objects.*

Roger Livet's effort is a failure in so far as it betrays the paintings of Goetz, and in so far as these objects are merely the expression of Agnès's imagination (she being unable to communicate with her mathematician).

* Few films come so close to this view as the comedies of Preston Sturges.

This supposed objectivity is pure artifice, and it is no accident that it bears the taint of third-rate literature (that of Sartre). The cinema represents reality. But if reality were so beautiful (and bore as pretty a name as Agnès), there would be no cinema. (H.L.)

5: *La Ronde*

In this film written in flowing capitals there is little enough love-making. At best it is commemorated. But there are generally other things for the people involved to do. Monsieur Sacha Gordine to imitate Monsieur Guitry's signature. Monsieur Ophuls to read Beyle or Marivaux. Mademoiselle Joyeux to forget how sweet she was as Douce and to entertain a bad poet (who sometimes acts in plays at the Marigny). Monsieur Reggiani to do his best not to disrupt the script in order to stay with Simone Simon – which is a shame, as she is ravishingly beautiful. As for the other babblers (for that, since I have mentioned Stendhal, is what he called them), one at least is charming – Danielle Darrieux, so like the princess of whose adventures she is ignorant. Simone Signoret is a good prostitute, walking the streets as though born to it, and it is no fault of hers that she meets two of the worst actors in the French cinema there.

This fragile mosaic of emotions is reserved for rose-coloured spectators. What had the Vienna of 1900 to do with the masked darkness of Marivaux? With décors which are unashamedly so, with a waltz melody likely to break hearts and (maybe) become the rage, one suddenly feels that these Viennese were not wrong. It has been said already:

In the crossways of kisses
The years pass too quickly

and life is rather like dancing. (H.L.)

6: *Panic in the Streets*

Elia Kazan entered the history of the cinema by way of an amateur film, *Pie in the Sky*, which seems to have caused something of a stir. A theatre director, he came to Hollywood to make *Boomerang*, a competently done film about the injustice of justice. Nowadays he divides his time between Broadway (where Arthur Miller's play *Death of a Salesman* had a huge success) and Hollywood (where he adapted Tennessee Williams's play *A Streetcar Named Desire*). His two most recent films to be shown in Paris are *Pinky*, which skims the colour problem, and *Panic in the Streets*, an intelligent renewal of the thriller form, in which the plot unfolds hand in hand with the spreading of a plague.

Elia Kazan, it seems, makes no distinction between theatre and cinema. Not even, like Orson Welles, in appearance. The screen is the exact equivalent of the stage rectangle, and the mainspring of Kazan's direction is an accentuation of the phenomenon of the proscenium. This is clearly noticeable in certain close-ups which are treated like long shots, and certain entirely gratuitous camera movements. As regards plot, where cinema and literature

are reconciled, *Pinky* and *Panic in the Streets* are not written as novels but as narratives. That is, they are written in the past tense. Hence, probably, a strict impersonality which makes Kazan a classical director in the André Gide sense. An absence of style which reveals an affectionate contempt for art on the part of the author.

7: *No Sad Songs for Me*

A young girl who was taken to the cinema for the first time was hardly surprised at all to find how ugly Gérard Philipe was. How could one resist him as . . . or as . . . ? Her innocent heart took fire, she forgot all about the ugliness, and she wept, for all about her women in the audience could be heard saying 'What a wonderful actor!' How wrong they are. Stendhal tells us that 'beauty is an expression of character, or, put another way, of moral habits, and is consequently exempt from passion'. Yet it is undoubtedly true, by one of those quirks which are so frequent in the cinema, that in order to enjoy *No Sad Songs for Me* one must fall into the emotional trap.

One only looks at a woman's face if one is uncertain about her love. The beauty of this film lies in our certainty about Margaret Sullavan's heart. The only unusual thing about her is the oddity of her modesty. She is a woman of imagination, and therefore timid and tender. In the manner of young American women, she cuts her emotions skilfully from a pattern of happiness. Thus the classically constructed script here acquires considerable psychological force. Although it neglects space, it enables one to remain very close to the actress and to share her inner emotions. Some close-ups of Margaret Sullavan illustrate this. The effect of nervousness they produce springs from the degree of bewilderment they convey. They make us anxious about things where the actress may be quite composed. One cannot question the truth of this effect more than by mocking the confusion, so to speak, of the illusions which happiness assumes.

Thus the cinema plays with itself. An art of representation, all it knows of interior life are the precise and natural movements of well-trained actors. Jealousy, contempt, all the doughty deeds of the heart must keep a watchful eye on sudden and nonchalant or slow and passionate gestures. The cinema makes reality specific. It would be useless for it to try to make more of the instant than the instant itself contains. One sees that, contrary to current belief, there cannot be good direction without a good script. As Plato said, 'beauty is the splendour of truth'.

If destiny and death are the cinema's pet themes, then there must be a definition of the human condition within the carefully controlled presentation which is *mise en scène*.

No Sad Songs for Me is a very simple film. One says 'This woman . . .', and realizes with anguish that with these words one has predicted her death. It was inevitable that the cinema should play at least once with its own data. A friend told the heroine she was going to die soon. She could hardly believe it, but finally listened to reason and went home thinking she would find help,

'Close-ups . . . make us anxious about things': Margaret Sullavan in *No Sad Songs for Me* and . . .

or at least peace, since the love-affair which banished it had come to nothing. She was honest enough not to pity herself. Lack of imagination prevented her from seeing in this banishment anything other than a frivolous pleasure.

Sometimes the irritation of an overlong liaison thus discloses a certain happiness. There are admirable plots in which the actors change ideas like costumes. Here, on the other hand, they remove them as though undressing. As in a fashion show, they exist only so long as they are on show. Lacking importance, this woman's feelings are rent for a mere trifle. They become so fragile that her heart breaks. Margaret Sullavan dies to put an end to her exhaustion at the moment when, having lost her vanity, she is unhappy in the guise of model young wife. The film ends at once, the cinema having warmed to its own game. (H.L.)

8: *Strangers on a Train*

Hitchcock's most recent film will doubtless arouse controversy. Some critics will say it is unworthy of the director of *The Thirty-Nine Steps* and *Shadow of a Doubt*, others will find it mildly amusing and praise its qualities until they take on an air of false modesty. But those who have for Alfred Hitchcock, for *Blackmail* as much as *Notorious*, a vast and constant admiration, those who find in this director all the talent necessary for good cinema,

. . . Anna Karina in *Alphaville*

can be counted on the fingers of one hand. Outrageously decried by some while the rest ignore him – what is it about Hitchcock that merits attention?

Here is the subject of *Strangers on a Train*: a young tennis champion, already well known, in love with a Senator's daughter and wanting a divorce, meets a stranger on a train who offers to get rid of his wife – she refuses to divorce him – on condition that the tennis champion does away with his hated father. As soon as the tennis-player leaves the train he forgets his strange companion. But the latter, believing himself pledged, strangles the more than flighty wife and insists that the tennis-player fulfil his side of the bargain he believes was made in the train. Now free, but terrified by the stranger's audacity, the tennis-player eventually manages to convince the police of his innocence and marries the girl he loves.

This subject owes so little to anecdote or the picturesque, but is instead imbued with such lofty ambition, that probably only the cinema could handle it with so much dignity. I know no other recent film, in fact, which better conveys the condition of modern man, who must escape his fate without the help of the gods. Probably, too, the cinema is particularly suited to recording the drama, to make the best not so much of the myth of the death of God (with which the contemporary novel, alas, is by no means backward in taking liberties, as witness Graham Greene) as the baleful quality it suggests.

However, it was necessary that in the sign – in other words, that which indicates something in whose place it appears; in this case, a conflict of wills – the *mise en scène* should respect the arabesque which underlines its effect, and like Dreyer or Gance, should use it with delicate virtuosity; for it cannot shock through mere empty exaggeration. The significant and the signified are here set so high (if the idea is involved in the form, it becomes more incisive, but is also imprisoned like water in ice) that in the exploits of this criminal, Hitchcock's art cannot but show us the promethean image of his murderous little hand, his terror in face of the unbearable brilliance of the fire it steals.

(Let me make myself plain: it is not in terms of liberty and destiny that cinematographic *mise en scène* is measured, but in the ability of genius to batten on objects with constant invention, to take nature as a model, to be infallibly driven to embellish things which are insufficient – for instance, to give a late afternoon that Sunday air of lassitude and well-being. Its goal is not to express but to represent. In order that the great effort at representation engulfed in the Baroque should continue, it was necessary to achieve an inseparability of camera, director and cameraman in relation to the scene represented; and so the problem was not – contrary to André Malraux – in the way one shot succeeded another, but in the movement of the actor within the frame.)

Look at these stretches of heath, these neglected homes, or the sombre poetry of modern cities, those boats on a fairground lake, those immense avenues, and tell me if your heart does not tighten, if such severity does not frighten you. You are watching a spectacle completely subjected to the contingencies of the world; you are face to face with death. Yes, invention holds sway only over language, and *mise en scène* forces us to imagine an object in its signification; but these clever and violent effects are so only to transmit the drama to the spectator at its highest level – I refer, of course, to the strangling in the wood and the struggle on the merry-go-round, scenes which contain so many astonishing realities, such depth in their fantastic frenzy, that I fancy I breathe in them a gentle odour of profanation. The truth is that there is no terror untempered by some great moral idea. Should one reproach this renowned film-maker for flirting with appearances? Certainly the camera defies reality, but does not evade it; if it enters the present, it is to give it the style it lacks.

'It is useless to pretend that human creatures find their contentment in repose. What they require is action, and they will create it if it is not offered by life.' Could not these words by Charlotte Brontë equally well have been written by Kleist or Goethe? Today the most German of transatlantic directors offers us the most vivid, brilliant paraphrase of Faust – combining, I mean, lucidity and violence. Since *The Lodger*, Hitchcock's art has been profoundly Germanic, and those who accuse him of revelling in false and pointless bombast, those mean spirits who are foolish enough to applaud the contemptible – whether in the work of Buñuel or Malaparte – should

consider Hitchcock's constant preoccupation with constructing his themes: he makes persuasion, a very Dostoievskian notion, the secret mainspring of the drama. From German Expressionism, Hitchcock consciously retains a certain stylization of attitude, emotions being the result of a persistent purpose rather than of impetuous passion: it is through his actions that the actor finally becomes simply the instrument of action, and that only this action is natural; space is the impulse of a desire, and time its effort towards accomplishment.

I wager that the pen of Laclos could not have bettered a look of hatred from Ingrid Bergman, the Australian of *Under Capricorn*, lips flushing with disgust, less with self-shame than from a desire to make others share her degradation; or a shot from *Suspicion* where Joan Fontaine, hair wild, face drawn, feeling that she might be happier and that it would be better to lose her husband than witness his inconstancies, resents feeling consideration and even love for him, resents feeling his arms hold her gently, offering him her mouth, exposing herself to danger without the secret desire to do so, wondering if she is loved enough. She prefers to grieve, to weep tears, to languish under offences, to consent to them, make an effort to yield her heart, be upset because she does so, weave an incalculable number of difficulties in the certainty of illuminating her doubts instead of living drearily with them.

One cannot call the director of *The Paradine Case* and *Rebecca* a descendant of the Victorian novel. This is why I would also not compare him to Griffith – even though I find in both directors the same admirable ease in the use of figures of speech or technical processes; in other words they make the best use of the means available to their art form – but instead class him with Lang and Murnau.*

Like them, he knows that the cinema is an art of contrast, whether it describes life in society or in the heart. Murnau's *Faust* also revealed this incessant change in which the actor transcends his powers, taxes his senses, falls prey to a torrent of emotions in which extravagance yields to calm, jealousy becomes aversion, ambition becomes failure, and pleasure, remorse. If *Shadow of a Doubt* is in my opinion Hitchcock's least good film, as *M* was the least good of Lang's, it is because a cleverly constructed script is not enough to support the *mise en scène*. These films lack precisely what *Foreign Correspondent* and *Man Hunt* are criticized for. Is so rare a gift really to be questioned? I believe the answer lies in the innate sense of comedy possessed by the great film-makers. Think of the interlude between Yvette Guilbert and Jannings in *Faust*,[1] or on more familiar ground, of the comedies of Howard Hawks. The point is simply that all the freshness and invention of American films springs from the fact that they make the subject the motive for the *mise en scène*. The French cinema, on the other hand, still lives off some vague idea of satire; absorbed in a passion for the pretty and the

* Might not the astonishing success of German directors in Hollywood be explained – for the benefit of our sociological critics – by the strongly international character which enabled the quest for universality in these mystics to expand freely?

picturesque, in a perusal of Tristan and Isolde, it neglects truth and accuracy and runs the risk, in a word, of ending nowhere.

Certain critics, having seen *Strangers on a Train*, still withhold their admiration from Hitchcock, the better to lavish it on *The River*. Since they are the same persons who criticized Renoir so loud and long for remaining in Hollywood, and since they demonstrate so lively a taste for parody, I would ask them: do not these strangers on a train represent them in the exercise of their trade? (H.L.)

9: Defence and Illustration of Classical Construction

One remembers the vehemence with which Jean-Paul Sartre once attacked François Mauriac:[1] the author of *Anges Noirs*, he said, was incapable of endowing his heroes with the liberty with which our lives are adorned, the sudden desire to alter a given course, and in a monstrous parody made them hesitate only in order to ape the magnificence of God. But what vanity, too, to insist at all costs on crediting language with a certain metaphysical quality, when it could only raise to the level of the sublime in very special circumstances. Consider, rather, with Diderot, that morality and perspective are the two qualities essential to the artist, and that Baudelaire is saying the same thing when he says that beauty is composed of an eternal, invariable element whose quantity is extremely difficult to determine, and a relative element which might be, either by turns or all at once, period, fashion, moral, passion. One can see what possibilities of error exist in an art composed of disrespect, where reticence, as it were, is unable to hide its secrets; the most religious of arts, since it values man above the essence of things and reveals the soul within the body: in the cinema, in other words. Even today, critics wear themselves out in incredible labours, and manage to cloud the simplest and most obvious truths; they wrap themselves in philosophy, but I have no use for a writer who directs my attention to himself and to his wit instead of the people he is interpreting. I want, to quote Fénélon, 'a sublime so familiar that each will be tempted to believe he would have discovered it easily himself, although few are capable of discovering it'. Too much brilliance dazzles and embarrasses me: I prefer the pleasant and true to the astonishing and marvellous. It seems, moreover, that the crisis in contemporary literature over the last twenty-five years has caused the cinema to answer for errors which are the responsibility of literature. Our period writes so badly that it is amazed by such polished speeches as those of the American cinema (sober elegance and facile execution often discourage praise); confusing imagination with heart, it becomes irritated and refuses to acknowledge moral qualities which cannot but be present. Have we forgotten that this facility is nothing new, that the ease of the transatlantic film-makers once found its echo in our own amiable and unfortunate eighteenth century?

Everyone wrote well in those days (consider the circumstances under which *La Religieuse* was written), yet serious events were taking place.

My purpose is not paradox. I would like to note certain points common to the art of the eighteenth century and the *mise en scène* of recent years. Firstly, in the attitude of the artist to nature: he acknowledges nature as art's principal model. And then in the fact that it was not the cinema which inherited a narrative technique from the novel, but the novel which inherited an art of dialogue – lost, should one add, since Corneille? Oh! how many imagine the Bérénice, the Phèdre of their dreams, leaving the trace of her tears on the screen. But I fear that harmony, even of the most beautiful song, will not suffice this most virtuous of the arts: it also needs to be encumbered with truth, to correct – in Delacroix's fine phrase – the reality of that perspective in which the eye takes too much pleasure not to want to falsify it. By this I mean that it will not be content with imitating a reality 'seized at random' (Jean Renoir). In fact, if the cinema were no more than the art of narration which some would make its proud boast, then instead of being bored, one would take pleasure in those interminable efforts which are concerned above all with exposing in meticulous detail the secret motivations of a murderer or a coquette. But there is a look, posed so afresh on things at each instant that it pierces rather than solicits them, that it seizes in them what abstraction lies in wait for. I shall cite only one example in illustration, borrowed from the director of *La Règle du Jeu*. Owing less to the masters of Impression than to Henri David and Poussin, Renoir's *mise en scène* has the same quality of revealing detail without detaching it from its context. If Renoir uses a deep-focus style in *Madame Bovary*,[2] it is to imitate the subtle way in which nature conceals the relationship between its effects; if he prepares events, it is not in order to make them connect better, for he is more concerned with the impact of emotions than with the contagion they create.

Such is the nature of dialectic in the cinema: one must live rather than last. It is pointless to kill one's feelings in order to live longer. If the emergence of American comedy is as important as the advent of sound, it is because it brought back swiftness of action, and allowed the moment to be savoured to the full. We have indeed forgotten how to see: a sudden start of the shoulders means only fear, a wrinkling of the nose means only anger, when one is less anxious to grasp the action in its convolutions than in its exposition. I shall say, therefore, that American comedy owes less to Mack Sennett slapstick than to Griffith, and perhaps less to the director of *One Exciting Night* than to the director of *Queen Kelly* – or in other words, beyond Stroheim to German Expressionism. This school ended, perfectly logically, in the music-hall film and the happy gambols of Lillian Harvey (*Congress Dances*, *Liebelei*); Expressionism had made the eye the moral focus for feeling, Lubitsch made it what Stendhal said it was, the principal weapon of virtuous coquetry.

The eye, since it can say everything, then deny everything because it is merely casual, is the key piece in the film actor's game. One only looks what one feels, and what one does not wish to reveal as one's secret. Consider

the method of Otto Preminger,[3] the cunning and precise paraphrase this Viennese makes of reality, and you will soon notice that the use of shot and reaction shot, the preference for medium rather than long shots, reveals a desire to reduce the drama to the immobility of the face, for the face is not only part of the body, it is the prolongation of an idea which one must capture and reveal. A beautiful face, as La Bruyère wrote, is the most beautiful of sights. There is a famous legend which has it that Griffith, moved by the beauty of his leading lady, invented the close-up in order to capture it in greater detail. Paradoxically, therefore, the simplest close-up is also the most moving. Here our art reveals its transcendence most strongly, making the beauty of the object signified burst forth in the sign. With these huge eyes half-closing in discretion and desire, with these blenching lips, all we see in their anguish is the dark design they imply, and in their avowal only the illusions they conceal. Where Preminger uses a crane, Hawks is apt to use an axial cut: the means of expression change only because the subjects change, and the sign draws its signification not from itself but from what it represents, from the scene enacted. Nothing could be more wrong than to talk of classical construction as a language which had reached its peak of perfection before the Second World War with Lubitsch in America and Marcel Carné in France, and which would therefore be tantamount to an autonomous thought-process, applicable with equal success to any subject whatsoever. What I admire in Gance, Murnau, Dreyer or Eisenstein, is the gift these artists possess for seizing in reality what the cinema is best suited to glorify. Classical construction has long existed, and it would be insulting to Lubitsch to suggest that he was anxious to break with the theories of his elders. But just take a look at how Ida Lupino reproduces the 'Triangle style', as Gide once reproduced that of Madame de La Fayette. I find the adventures of her heroines (Sally Forrest in *Not Wanted*, Mala Powers in *Outrage*) as touching as the mischievousness of Bebe Daniels or the pert grace of Carol Dempster:[4] they fence themselves in with thoughtless cruelties, and then, suddenly, tired of prudence, they cast caution to the winds and abandon themselves to the joy of loving.

I would like to contend with those who seek to lay down absolute rules. Recently, for instance, a celebrated sociologist analysed the myth of death in the American cinema,* but all he was looking for in the few films he cited was a bolster for his thesis. All I mean to claim is that the *mise en scène* of *To Have and Have Not* is better suited than that of *The Best Years of Our Lives* to convey aberrations of heart and mind, that this is its purpose, whereas the object of the latter is rather the external relationships between people. Compare *Wuthering Heights* to *The Best Years of Our Lives*, see how Eisenstein returns to the sources of his art, and tell me whether the destiny of the modern cinema does not take the same form as it did for the belated partisans of romanticism. Yes, *with new thoughts let us make old verses*.

I would go so far as to defy anyone to capture in a medium long shot (*plan général*) the extreme disquiet, the inner agitation, in a word, the confusion which the waist shot (*plan américain*), through its very inexpressiveness, conveys so powerfully. If one had to pin down a somewhat excessive taste for death in the American cinema, I would suggest that it lies in the fear of repose, in those moments where, in the panic of the heart, the slightest gesture reveals certain knowledge and, all at once, hatred, repentance, mockery and courage. The fact is, perhaps, that the most delicate nuances of the soul must be treated with greater emphasis, just as a gesture which draws attention to itself excuses the delicate from any need to be touched by it.

* Roger Caillois, *Quatre Essais de Sociologie Contemporaine*.

I would even see in that spatial discontinuity occasioned by shot changes – which certain devotees of the 'ten-minute take'[5] make a point of despising – the reason for the greater part of the truth which this figure of style contains. What other construction could offer us so faithful an image of a lovers' conversation as the taxi-ride taken by Jane Wyman and Michael Wilding in *Stage Fright*, and move us so much through something so conventional? In *The Magnificent Ambersons* it is not the famous kitchen scene which I find shattering but, in this atmosphere of a twilight of the gods, the little face clutching at happiness which Welles has secured from Anne Baxter. Yes, in the modesty of these films by Mankiewicz (*All About Eve*, *House of Strangers*), Mark Robson (*Roughshod*, *My Foolish Heart*) and Otto Preminger (*Whirlpool*, *Fallen Angel*, *Where the Sidewalk Ends*), I am inclined to see a reaction, maybe unconscious, against the religious tendency of the modern cinema; if these directors pride themselves on staging only those moments when the world's strongest bonds loosen and break, if they feed on ironic jealousy where ambition takes on the aspect of love, it is because they are wary of an art which, as Maurice Schérer[6] said, might draw its deepest inspiration from a belief in the soul.

Abandoning even the habit of placing one of the interlocutors in the foreground (I noticed that this only happens when one learns later in the film that he has been lying), the classical construction sticks even closer to psychological reality, by which I mean that of the emotions; there are, in effect, no spiritual storms, no troubles of the heart which remain unmarked by physical causes, a rush of blood to the brain, a nervous weakness, whose intensity would not be lessened by frequent comings and goings. If this manner is the most classical, it is also because rarely has such contempt been shown for photographing a world seized by accident, and because here language is only the reflection of passions, which they may therefore dominate. Certainly one has only to consider the development of the greatest American artist – I mean Howard Hawks – to see how relative this idea of classicism is. From the art of *Only Angels Have Wings* to that of *His Girl Friday*, *The Big Sleep* and indeed, of *To Have and Have Not*, what does one see? An increasingly precise taste for analysis, a love for this artificial grandeur connected to movements of the eyes, to a way of walking, in short, a greater awareness than anyone else of what the cinema can glory in, and a refusal to profit from this (as I would accuse Orson Welles of doing in *Macbeth*, and Robert Bresson in *Journal*

d'un curé de campagne) to create anti-cinema, but instead, through a more rigorous knowledge of its limits, fixing its basic laws.

I think I have said enough about the error of critics in falling under the influence of contemporary philosophy, in elevating certain figures of style into a vision of the world, in investing some technical process or other with astrological pretensions it cannot possibly have, and hence in stripping classical psychology of that part of it which the cinema could make use of, render explicit, by not reducing man to 'the succession of appearances by which he is manifest' (Jean-Paul Sartre), and, paradoxically, by restoring to the monism of the phenomenon only the plurality of interpretation which it lacks. In the cinema, beauty is merely the avowal of personality, it offers us indications about an actress which are not in her performance. The cinema does not query the beauty of a woman, it only doubts her heart, records her perfidy (it is an art, La Bruyère says, of the entire person to place a word or an action so that it puts one off the scent), sees only her movements. Do not smile at such passion fired by logic; one can clearly see that what ensures its worth is that at each instant it is a question of loving or dying. (H.L.)

10: What is Cinema?

To the question 'What is Art?', modern criticism replies only with hesitations, for it is a little frightened of its own illusions. Let us draw a rapid sketch of these illusions: a terrifying image where the failure of contemporary art is clearly written. Do you not see that it has rejected what was for centuries the pride of the great masters, and indeed of humbler craftsmen: the portrait of the individual? False arguments followed to justify these excesses. Is it not strange that today one must admire and praise Matisse at the end of his life for the delicacy of line which, in the days of Botticelli and Titian, even Ingres or David, was something painters learned at school?

One can of course blame Aragon[1] for his lack of taste, and protest against his excessive praise of Soviet painting, but we must nevertheless applaud in the author of *Libertinage* the condemnation of what he once made a show of admiring. He sees too clearly the potential of modern art not to be mistrustful. Metaphysical pretensions are the rage in the *salons*. This is the fashion. But do not mistake the power of fashion. For its sake, ideas – like women – are willing to disfigure themselves. It can make youth ridiculous and beauty perilous. This absurd opposition between the artist and nature is the more absurd, the more vain, in that nothing, neither Manet nor Schumann nor Dostoievsky, prefigured it. Poor novel, which makes ambiguity its ambition! Poor painting, fettered by fear of representation! In short, I would praise Aragon without reserve when he deplores the too ambiguous morality of our time and its art.

Would one blush for the religiously realistic art of the cinema if we were not eaten away by an unhappy desire to change the world? But here artistic creation does not mean painting one's soul in things, but painting the soul of things. In Jean Renoir's *Madame Bovary*, it is a precious moment when, as

Emma and Léon come out of the church, we suddenly breathe the smell of stone, and with it the musty flavour of life in Rouen and Emma's disappointed dreams.

Yet the fact that a landscape may be a state of mind does not necessarily mean that poetry is only captured by chance, as our too clever documentarists would have us believe, but that the natural order corresponds to that of the heart and mind. Flaherty's genius, after all, is not so far removed from that of Hitchcock – Nanook hunting his prey is like a killer stalking his victims – and lies in identifying time with the desire which consumes it, guilt with suffering, fear and remorse with pleasure, and in making of space the tangible terrain of one's uneasiness. Art attracts us only by what it reveals of our most secret self. This is the sort of depth I mean. Obviously it assumes an idea of man which is hardly revolutionary, and which the great film-makers from Griffith to Renoir were too conservative to dare to deny. So, to the question 'What is Cinema?', I would first reply: the expression of lofty sentiments. (H.L.)

11: *Les Petites Filles Modèles*

It is my habit of an evening to stroll down the Boulevard Saint-Germain. There, the day before yesterday, I met my friend Eric Rohmer, the film-maker. He had just returned, he told me, from Normandy, and was filming *Les Petites Filles Modèles*, from the story by the Comtesse de Ségur.

'A very faithful adaptation', he assured me. 'I think the failure of *Les Malheurs de Sophie* was due to the cavalier way in which Jacqueline Audry and Pierre Laroche treated the original. So, because I am sure the public likes to find in a film what it liked in the book, I have been careful to follow this celebrated novel to the letter.'

I was astonished. What! The scriptwriter of *Journal d'un scélérat*, champion of Isidore Isou, close friend of Anthony Barrier, object of admiration in the post-war avant-garde circles – was this man to make his début in the professional format with the rosiest story in the Bibliothèque Rose? Rohmer nodded assent.

'There are, of course, more cruel stories, but quite apart from the fact that I shall have little difficulty in proving that the adventures of Sophie Fichini of Fleurville can rival the most epic of Westerns, I don't think this is a problem. I shall be only too happy to deal with magnanimity and modesty instead of the hatred and disgust which our elders, alas, have grown accustomed to.'

'You believe that as far as novelty is concerned, orthodoxy is the only answer?'

'Certainly.'

'Aren't you afraid that the uncharitable may shower you with epithets, of which the least offensive is likely to be "reactionary"?'

Rohmer raised his hat and looked me straight in the eye.

'You see, the position of the film-maker is at one and the same time the most enviable and the most dangerous. That is its paradox. I believe the cinema more capable than anybody of glorifying a conception of man which

is that of both Racine and Goethe. But on the other hand, there is no doubt that its methods have everything to gain from being revolutionary. This is where my complaint lies.'

'You mean that French technicians are so bound by routine that they hinder your inspiration?'

'Exactly.'

'You have, I believe, a technical supervisor assigned to you?'

'Yes. My chief complaint about him, and about my lighting cameraman, is that they slow down the shooting by worrying too much about certain taboos. The real lesson of the Italian cinema has not yet been generally understood. It really is incredible when a cameraman says to you: "Don't do that, I couldn't light it. Don't have your actors move about too much or I'll have to redo my lighting." The plain fact is that our cameramen lack courage – and they aren't going to get it from schools like E.T.P.C. or I.D.H.E.C.[1] Quite the contrary.'

'Forgive me for interrupting. You argued in favour of a conventional cinema. Is there not some contradiction in your taking exception to old-fashioned methods?'

'No, because they are established on false or distinctly preconceived ideas. To refer again to the Italian cinema, I know of no film which better celebrates the traditional virtues like courage and generosity than *Rome, Open City*. Yet it was shot in a very rough and ready manner. If Michelangelo Antonioni has become the most precious, the greatest virtuoso, among Italian directors today, there is no doubt that his cameraman Serafin[2] is largely responsible.'

Rohmer lit a Chesterfield and blew the smoke thoughtfully to the sky. Then he went on.

'French cameramen are too preoccupied with composition, but the cinema has nothing to do with painting.'

'Your complaint, basically, is that they prefer to light the actor rather than the ambiance?'

'That is so.'

'When do you expect to finish?'

'I imagine *Les Petites Filles Modèles* will be ready for screening around the Christmas holidays.'

Thereupon we parted. (N.B.)

Return to Criticism and First Short Films: August 1956–January 1958

Between October 1952 and August 1956, Godard published no critical articles. He left France, travelled, and returned to Switzerland, to work on the construction of the Grande-Dixence Dam, where he made, with his own money, Opération Béton *(20 minutes, 1952). In Geneva in 1955, he shot* Une Femme Coquette *(10 minutes), and appeared in Jacques Rivette's* Le Coup du Berger. *Then began a close and regular collaboration on* Cahiers du Cinéma. *In 1957, Godard directed* Tous les garçons s'appellent Patrick *(21 minutes).*

12: *The Lieutenant Wore Skirts*; *Artists and Models*

The grotesque is an anything but easy genre. It requires sensitivity rather than intelligence, so many of the smartest directors come to grief with it. No chance of cheating here, of escaping into the ivory tower of the misunderstood. Misfire your effects, fail to amuse with your clowning, and you will be thought a fool or a bungler. It's a hard law, admittedly, but it enables one to gauge a film-maker.

Only he who takes comedy seriously deserves to succeed in it, this being a much surer tactic than putting jokes and banter into a drama. Which is to say that in this little game an alert Frank Tashlin is worth two Billy Wilders.[1] The fact is that one cannot teach the best Bob Hope gagman in the world to pull faces (*Son of Paleface*). It would be wise to reflect seven years before claiming that *The Lieutenant Wore Skirts* is a copy because the director of *Susan Slept Here* is an original, a diamond cut diamond who indulges the luxury of overtaking that sucker Wilder just as Fangio overtakes Porfirio Rubirosa; he is more skilful, without pretension in composition, he goes quicker and gets further, not having been born yesterday.

The Lieutenant Wore Skirts, in the style of Voltaire's *Candide* or Hitchcock's *Rich and Strange*, recounts the misadventures of a couple of idiots who are brought by too much love to domestic squabble and then to the point of

Une Femme est une Femme: Jean-Claude Brialy and Anna Karina

break-up. Imagine Bécassine and the silliest boy you can think of trying to prove they love each other and only succeeding in hating each other. Happiness is not gay, says Max Ophuls; because gaiety is the opposite of happiness, caps Tashlin. *Artists and Models* does nothing to give him the lie. No film could be more devastating, more bitter in its humour, more brackish, with the richness of the invention constantly aggravated by the poverty of the situations, with the uneasy spectator at first forcing an unwilling laugh, then feeling ashamed, laughing again mechanically, seized in a pitiless mesh of imbecilities, and ending by roaring with laughter because it isn't funny at all. It is, in other words, an acme of stupidity, but an acme in the same way as *Bouvard et Pécuchet*.[2]

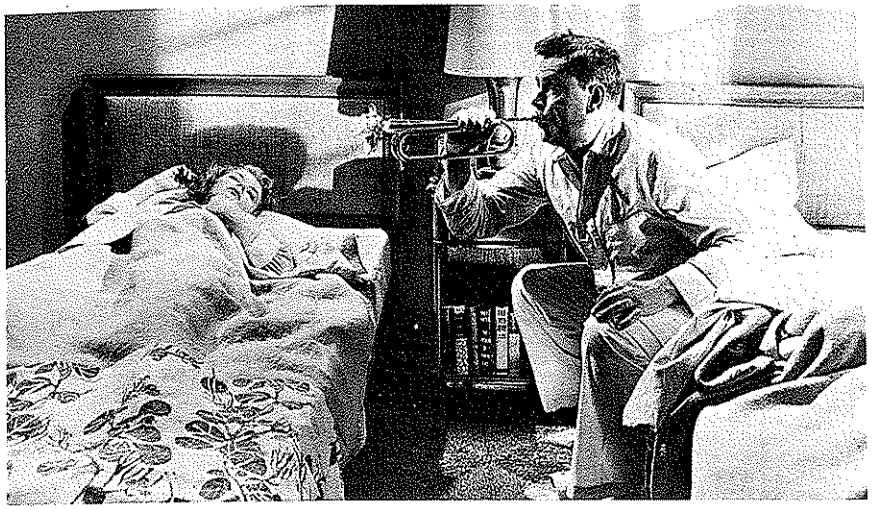
But to get back to our starting-point. With Tashlin there is no starting-point, and this is precisely his originality. Only the point of arrival matters, a scene at the very limits of absurdity in the ferociously eccentric world of the *Pim, Pam, Poum*[3] of our childhood.

It is easy to see that Tashlin fondly remembers the Lubitsch of *Cluny Brown* and *To Be or Not to Be*. American comedy is dead? So be it.

Long live American comedy.

13: *The Man Who Knew Too Much*

One market day an Allied secret agent, disguised, of course, as an Arab, is killed right in the middle of the crowd in Marrakech. An important diplomat is shortly to be assassinated. Before he dies, the spy manages to whisper his secret to an innocent witness to the crime, an American tourist who is then uncertain whether or not to pass it on in his turn to the (ex) French police in



The Lieutenant Wore Skirts: Sheree North and Tom Ewell

Morocco. A telephone call helps him make up his mind to say nothing. His little boy has been kidnapped, says a voice at the other end of the wire, and if he talks, he and his wife will never see their child again. An incredible but very real threat, which instantly fills our two Babbitts – James Stewart as a doctor from Indianapolis and Doris Day as a once-celebrated singer – with alarm. Nevertheless, like a modern Robinson family, they launch out into the unknown, following their adventure without losing heart. Where to? To London. They have reason to believe that the plot will unravel there. Zig and Puce on Dolly's trail could not show more heroism or more common sense.[1] Chance it and trust to God. 'Che sera, sera.'[2] This is also the opinion of Scotland Yard, who are waiting as they leave the plane. An important official wants to take the affair in hand. He fears complications of the kind the French Cabinet calls 'cosmic'. Is it worth the risk of aggravating an already tense international situation for a little boy? James Stewart and Doris Day say yes. Who can blame them? We, too, have little boys, or maybe little girls. But no matter – they must act. And, in fact, with a little luck – but they earn it – our amateur Perry Masons soon pick up the kidnappers' trail, meanwhile unwittingly foiling the plot of a foreign Power which has once again tried to undermine the prestige of old England.

It is easy to see what is likely to shock the susceptible in this story: the touch of extravagance and, what obviously attracted Hitchcock, the introduction of this extravagance in lives as ordinary as yours and mine. This is perhaps the most improbable of Hitchcock's films, but also the most realistic. What is 'suspense'? Waiting, and therefore a void to be filled; and more and more Hitchcock loves to fill it with asides which have little bearing on the event.

When he leaves the studio to shoot on location, the director of *To Catch a Thief* allows his actors more freedom, lets his camera linger on a landscape, seizes neatly and firmly on every droll character or bizarre object to come his way. The scenes in the bedroom, the Arab café, the two police offices (French and English), the taxidermist's shop, the Presbyterian chapel, the concert or the embassy ought, if they are logical, to make all the Buñuels and Zavattinis of this world pale with envy. Today Alfred Hitchcock looks all round his characters, just as he forces them to look round. Not that he ever loses interest in them, but although he had previously depicted stupidity, vice or folly without tenderness, he had never before stressed with such fierce irony the ridiculousness of the most natural, everyday gestures. The characters in *The Man Who Knew Too Much* are not exactly puppets, they are at once more and less than the marionette described by Valéry.

All right, you will say, but what about the suspense? A booby-trap? I don't think so, here even less than in the other films. Firstly, because the extraordinary serves as a foil for the ordinary, which, left to its own devices, would engender nothing but dullness. Secondly, one must admit, because Hitchcock believes in destiny. He believes with a smile on his lips, but it is the smile which convinces me. If the story were simply frightening, perhaps we would not be naïve enough to play along. Hitchcock cunningly presents us with a well-bred destiny, speaking the language of the drawing-room rather than of German philosophy. The clash of cymbals has the affectation of a commonplace. The effect is crude, but would be even cruder if it tried to disguise itself, to sneak by without drawing attention to itself. People say that Hitchcock lets the wires show too often. But because he shows them, they are no longer wires. They are the pillars of a marvellous architectural design made to withstand our scrutiny.

'Che sera, sera': this time, whether you like it or not, it is explicit in the text. I know Hitchcock doesn't believe it entirely, for the moral of the film is also 'God helps those who help themselves.' 'When Stavrogin believes,' wrote Dostoievsky, 'he does not believe that he believes, but when he does not believe, he still does not believe that he believes.'[3]

But we can believe in Doris Day's tears, and no other Hitchcock heroine's tears seem so unlike face-pulling. We who know all, and know that her alarm is needless, perhaps we sympathize even more readily. Why does she weep? Why does she wail? What has she to do with this foreign diplomat? Is she so crazy, so imprudent? She is a woman, or rather she is like us all. We believe in suspense. We believe in destiny. Our anguish is increased by what we know, hers by what she does not know. We watch her with a touch of cruelty, a half-feigned terror, and a pity of which we did not know ourselves capable.

This film by a supposedly misogynous director has as its sole mainspring – assuming one resolutely rejects metaphysics – feminine intuition. It is, like his preceding films, without self-indulgence, but the better displays its moments of grace and liberty. Sometimes, like the little boy held prisoner in the embassy who hears his mother's voice as she sings in the *salon*, we are

touched in the work of this caustic and brilliant man by a grace which may only come to us in snatches from afar, but which minds more immediately lyrical are incapable of dispensing with such delicacy.

Let us love Hitchcock when, weary of passing simply for a master of taut style, he takes us the longest way round.

14: Montage my Fine Care

'We'll save it in the cutting-room'; true of James Cruze, Griffith, Stroheim, this maxim hardly applied at all to Murnau, Chaplin, and became irremediably false with all sound films. Why? Because with a film like *October* (and even more with *Que Viva Mexico!*), montage is above all an integral part of *mise en scène*. Only at peril can one be separated from the other. One might just as well try to separate the rhythm from a melody. *Eléna et les hommes* and *Mr Arkadin* are both models of montage because each is a model of *mise en scène*. 'We'll save it in the cutting-room': a typical producer's axiom, therefore. The most that efficient editing will give a film otherwise without interest is precisely the initial impression of having been directed. Editing can restore to actuality that ephemeral grace neglected by both snob and film-lover, or can transform chance into destiny. Can there be any higher praise of what the general public confuses with script construction?

If direction is a look, montage is a heart-beat. To foresee is the characteristic of both: but what one seeks to foresee in space, the other seeks in time. Suppose you notice a young girl in the street who attracts you. You hesitate to follow her. A quarter of a second. How to convey this hesitation? *Mise en scène* will answer the question 'How shall I approach her?' But in order to render explicit the other question, 'Am I going to love her?', you are forced to bestow importance on the quarter of a second during which the two questions are born. It may be, therefore, that it will be for the montage rather than the *mise en scène* to express both exactly and clearly the life of an idea or its sudden emergence in the course of a story. When? Without playing on words, each time the situation requires it, each time within a shot when a shock effect demands to take the place of an arabesque, each time between one scene and another when the inner continuity of the film enjoins with a change of shot the superimposition of the description of a character on that of the plot. This example shows that talking of *mise en scène* automatically implies montage. When montage effects surpass those of *mise en scène* in efficacity, the beauty of the latter is doubled, the unforeseen unveiling secrets by its charm in an operation analogous to using unknown quantities in mathematics.

Anyone who yields to the temptation of montage yields also to the temptation of the brief shot. How? By making the look a key piece in his game. Cutting on a look is almost the definition of montage, its supreme ambition as well as its submission to *mise en scène*. It is, in effect, to bring out the soul under the spirit, the passion behind the intrigue, to make the heart prevail over the intelligence by destroying the notion of space in favour of that of time. The famous sequence of the cymbals in the remake of *The Man Who*

'If direction is a look . . .': Michel Subor and Anna Karina in *Le Petit Soldat*

Knew Too Much is the best proof. Knowing just how long one can make a scene last is already montage, just as thinking about transitions is part of the problem of shooting. Certainly, a brilliantly directed film gives the impression of having simply been placed end to end, but a film brilliantly edited gives the impression of having suppressed all direction. Cinematographically speaking, granting the different subjects, the battle in *Alexander Nevsky* is in no way inferior to *The Navigator*.[1] In other words, to give the impression of duration through movement, of a close shot through a long shot, is one of the aims of *mise en scène* and the opposite of one of those of montage. Invention and improvisation takes place in front of the movieola just as much as it does on the set. Cutting a camera movement in four may prove more effective than keeping it as shot. An exchange of glances, to revert to our previous example, can only be expressed with sufficient force – when necessary – by editing. In Balzac's *Une Ténébreuse Affaire*, when Peyrade and Corentin force the door of the Saint-Cygne *salon*, their first glance is for Laurence: 'We'll get you my girl' – 'I shan't tell you anything.' The proud young woman and Fouché's spies have discovered their most mortal enemy in a single look. A simple reverse shot, in its very sobriety, will render this terrible exchange of glances more forcefully than any carefully worked out pan or tracking shot. The thing to be conveyed is how long the struggle will last and on what ground it is to be fought. The montage, consequently, both denies and prepares the way for the *mise en scène*: the two are interdependent. To direct means to scheme, and one says of a scheme that it is well or badly *mounted*.

This is why saying that a director should closely supervise the editing of his film comes to the same thing as saying that the editor should also forsake

the smell of glue and celluloid for the heat of the arc-lamps. Wandering on the set he will discover exactly where the interest of a scene lies, which are its strong and weak moments, what demands a change of shot, and will therefore not yield to the temptation of cutting simply on movement – the ABC of montage, I admit, provided it is not used too mechanically in the manner of, say, Marguerite Renoir,[2] who often gives the impression of cutting a scene just as it was going to become interesting. In so doing, the editor would be taking his first steps in direction.

15: Future, Present, Past: Magirama

Magirama! Rereading *Le Père Goriot*, one realizes that Mama Vauquer's lodgers couldn't have found a better label[1] for the spectacle presented by Abel Gance (and Nelly Kaplan) at the Studio 28, the avant-garde cinema which thirty years ago presented on a triple screen the same Abel Gance's *Napoléon* – then all alone, if one is to believe the poet of polyvision, because the good fairy of cinema had not yet breathed on Nelly Kaplan's Argentinian cradle. Although gifted with 'a seismographic sensitivity, and sensing with a sort of inspired premonition that the visual waves of the cinema must possess their own music', Nelly Kaplan in fact was to take some twenty-five years to arrive 'intuitively at polyvision', whereas Mozart took only four in music. Of course one doesn't make a film at the same rate as one composes a sonata, even a short and especially a polyvized one, always assuming into the bargain, naturally, that polyvision does bring us 'what no Art until now has been able to give us'. But if one admits for even a second the Mozart-Nelly Kaplan comparison which Abel Gance takes as axiomatic, one need only listen to the Sonata K1 to see how exaggerated are the praises showered by the director of *La Fin du Monde* on his disciple (whose schoolroom exercises, moreover, he amiably supervises, thus proving, not without malice, that polyvision really does exist because it already boasts its amateur films). *Châteaux de nuages* and *Auprès de ma blonde* are as unworthy of their sponsorship by the greatest French director of the silent cinema as that Sonata K1 is worthy of Concerto K622. I repeat, of the silent cinema. Gance, alas, was no more able than Griffith, Stroheim or even Eisenstein – though each for different reasons – to submit to the new demands of sound, and to which, setting aside Dreyer and Chaplin, only Fritz Lang was able to adapt himself successfully, though more disgusted than anyone else at having to play the game and yet – and this is his greatness – playing it without cheating.

Of all these giants akin to the albatross of poetry, the case of Abel Gance is perhaps the most tragic. He flew too high and in a sky too pure not to risk death if he fell. In 1927 he was thirty years ahead of his time when he used a triple screen for his wonderful *Napoléon*. But today the cinema has finally become what Abel Gance wanted it to be, and this he readily acknowledges. 'If people had followed my lead thirty years ago', he writes in a note on polyvision, 'the cinema would have evolved much more rapidly towards its new style.' But the cinema – and this is the important thing – did not

acquire its new style, as Abel Gance would have liked, through polyvision.

The modern cinema owes Abel Gance as great a debt as the automobile owes André Citroën[2] or commercial aviation owes René Couzinet. Thirty years ago, that cinema might well have been given over entirely to polyvision, just as it will soon be given over entirely to CinemaScope, or maybe Todd AO. But it wasn't, Is this a good thing? A bad thing? The wind bloweth where it listeth, and with the help of the gods, today it bloweth against Abel Gance. Is this a cause for regret?

The question may seem cruel and ungenerous, but it is scarcely necessary to justify it by examining the specimens of polyvision presented by Abel Gance (and Nelly Kaplan). These films, in fact, tell us nothing we did not already know from *Napoléon*, and the tone of their makers is even more dubious. 'The physiological euphoria of new sensations – the nuclear revolution imposes the ubiquity of time and space – the lateral screens surging like waves from the variable screen will suddenly raise the potential power of suggestion of the central image to infinity – past, present and future will be interchangeable entities in a fourth dimension which will extend the universe in areas and facets as yet unseen by the human eye – polyvision multiplies the circumscribed postulates of the single screen through architectural construction and dramatic simultaneity of the images – the age of fission in the image has come.' This is the sort of language which would make even the most bluestocking of *littérateurs* blush. In actual fact, polyvision differs from the ordinary cinema only through being able to show simultaneously what the ordinary cinema shows in succession. Think of the departure of the army of Italy for the Po Valley in *Napoléon*. On the centre screen, a battalion on the march; on the side screens, Bonaparte galloping along a road. The effect is striking. After a few minutes we feel we have travelled all the thousands of kilometres of that prodigious Italian campaign.

So the triple screen, whether associated with the variable screen or not, may in certain scenes provoke supplementary effects in the sphere of pure sensation, but no more; and I admire Renoir, Welles or Rossellini precisely because they achieve a similar or even superior result by more logical means, breaking the frame but not destroying it. Let us take another example of the treatment of a scene by polyvision: people talking in the street and looking at what is going on around them. On the centre screen, the people talking; to the left and right, views of traffic, cars, pedestrians, shouts and noises, etc. There is no question that one would get a certain impression of reality from a scene like this. Yet another example: James Mason is hitting Barbara Rush on the staircase, and seeing a cupboard he gets the idea of shutting her in to prevent her from telephoning. One might 'polyvize' the scene as follows: in the centre, James Mason and Barbara Rush; on the left (if Mason is looking left) the cupboard; on the right, a close-up of James Mason, or possibly of Barbara Rush. What would be the result? Less good, certainly, than that obtained by Nicholas Ray in this very scene.* The gift of ubiquity, in short, is

* In *Bigger than Life*.

probably the worst present one could offer a film-maker. If one wants to tell a story, a tale, an adventure, one will be forced for most of the time to consider the triple screen as a single one – a CinemaScope screen in other words – because, pending evidence to the contrary, the cinema remains Euclidean. Will *Au Royaume de la Terre*, the next polyvized film by Abel Gance (and Nelly Kaplan) supply that evidence? One is at liberty to hope so.

16: *Hot Blood*

If the cinema no longer existed, Nicholas Ray alone gives the impression of being capable of reinventing it, and what is more, of wanting to. While it is easy to imagine John Ford as an admiral, Robert Aldrich on Wall Street, Anthony Mann on the trail of Belliou la Fumée or Raoul Walsh as a latter-day Henry Morgan under Caribbean skies, it is difficult to see the director of *Run for Cover* doing anything but make films. A Logan or a Tashlin, for instance, might make good in the theatre or music-hall, Preminger as a novelist, Brooks as a school-teacher, Fuller as a politician, Cukor a Press agent – but not Nicholas Ray. Were the cinema suddenly to cease to exist, most directors would be in no way at a loss; Nicholas Ray would. After seeing *Johnny Guitar* or *Rebel Without a Cause*, one cannot but feel that here is something which exists only in the cinema, which would be nothing in a novel, the stage or anywhere else, but which becomes fantastically beautiful on the screen. Nicholas Ray is *morally* a director, first and foremost. This explains the fact that in spite of his innate talent and obvious sincerity, a script which he does not take seriously will remain superficial.

At first glance this seems to be the case with *Hot Blood*, which is treated very casually, however, for the basic situation is not without promise. Taken literally, it is the situation of *The Lusty Men* in reverse, or Cukor's *Bhowani Junction* if you like: weary of adventure, someone returns to the people to whom he belongs. No one who shares my opinion that D. H. Lawrence's *The Plumed Serpent* is the most important novel of the twentieth century will be surprised when I say that here, had he so chosen, Nicholas Ray could have found a subject even more modern in its overtones than the ones he prefers. It seems he felt differently, however, and saw *Hot Blood* merely as a diversion between two *a priori* more ambitious films. Should one hold this against him? Renoir has just demonstrated with *Eléna* that taking it easy is a very serious thing, and even if he was amusing himself by taking it easy, or vice versa, I would therefore take Nicholas Ray to task for having on this occasion taken his fun too lightly.

But, I can hear people say, the film is just a commercial chore about gipsies, with Cornel Wilde forced to marry Jane Russell while she quits the tribe of which he is Dauphin and then realizes how much she needs them. Perhaps, but it isn't so simple, because I like to think that Nicholas Ray is honest enough to become involved only in something that involves him, and this was the case here. *Hot Blood* offered a chance to tackle a subject which on his own admission is dear to him – the ethnic minority – to depict a race

Hot Blood (Jane Russell, Cornel Wilde, Helen Westcott); *Bande à part* (Anna Karina, Claude Brasseur, Sami Frey)

through an individual, and so follow the path opened up by Rossellini while still going his own way.

Each shot of this film (slightly angled since he has been shooting in CinemaScope) proves, moreover, that the director is not totally uninterested, and that he was not replaced by Raoul Walsh as one might have been led to believe by the Jane Russell character, whose mannerisms are exactly those of Mamie in *The Revolt of Mamie Stover*. The plot itself, although badly handled, carries Ray's stamp, and the Cornel Wilde character is very close to those played by Sterling Hayden, Arthur Kennedy and James Cagney in his earlier films. Always, in a Ray film, the leading character returns to something he once abandoned or scorned. For him it is not a question of conquering but – more difficult – of reconquering a position lost through immaturity, inertia or discontent.

So one may well regret that Nicholas Ray did not feel called upon to deal more trenchantly with a situation and characters which might have made *Hot Blood* a less anodyne work. No reservations are necessary, however, in praising the deliberate and systematic use of the gaudiest colours to be seen in the cinema: barley-sugar orange shirts, acid-green dresses, violet cars, blue and pink carpets. The whole thing is a little like Van Dongen (at his best),[1] and puts paid once and for all to those who still believe that colour in the cinema is more suited to soft than violent tones. For a purely technical reason, moreover, depth of focus in CinemaScope (which will not permit the use of a lens with a focal length shorter than 50 mm) is obtained by accentuating contrasts (cf. films shot by Joe MacDonald and John Alton).

Hot Blood, in short, is a semi-successful film to the extent that Ray was semi-uninterested in it. A success almost in spite of its director, I should add; or better, brought off by Nicholas Ray's innate sense of cinema: in an almost automatic manner, therefore, but less naïvely than that writing beloved of the early Surrealists. The whole cinema and nothing but the cinema, I was saying of Nicholas Ray. This eulogy entails a reservation. Nothing but cinema may not be the whole cinema.

17: *Courte Tête*

Norbert Carbonnaux is not a bad film-maker, in the sense that one says of someone one likes that he's not a bad chap. In other words, Norbert Carbonnaux means well. This much one knew, or rather did not yet know because of *Costaud des Batignolles* and *La Tournée des Grands Ducs*, on which, in 1951 and 1952, Norbert Carbonnaux was more or less co-director[1] as well as co-scriptwriter. Then came *Les Corsaires du Bois de Boulogne* – indeed, yes – again with Raymond Bussières, probably because they were living in the same block. This was a pleasant film, a bit amateurish, which revealed a touch of both charm and salt[2] in spite of Annette Poivre and the fact that the script would have had even more flavour if it had been written by the Annette of *Rue de l'Estrapade*.[3] The trouble with *Corsaires du Bois de Boulogne*, though, is that it follows rather too deliberately in the wake of a

genre – crazy operetta – where it is all too easy to fall on your face unless your name happens to be Jacques Tati, while featuring the talents of Francis Blanche and Gilles Margaritis, which means that the film inevitably did not live up to its initial promise. Luckily, parting company with Companeez,[4] whose pupil he had been for some time, Carbonnaux fell on his feet, and with *Courte Tête* has opted for a bird in the hand instead of one in those bushes.

The subject, being borrowed from Fellini's *Il Bidone*, is not exactly original. Yet it seems likely that Norbert Carbonnaux had been thinking about it for some time, and was particularly anxious to film it since, before being able to make *Courte Tête*, he even turned down several offers, among them a *Mademoiselle Pigalle* with Brigitte Bardot which finally became *Cette Sacrée Gamine*.[5] Between ourselves, one might add anyway that layabouts and confidence tricksters are ten a penny as a subject. All one needs, to get ideas for the genre, is to turn to page three of *France Soir*; or, if you prefer better prose, the first part of Defoe's *Adventures of Colonel Jack*. So the story of the 'Queen of Kashmir', a cheap tart with whom Fernand Gravey dazzles Jean Richard as though she were Gélinotte, is quite as good as the one about the crook who sold the municipality of Marseille a machine for repelling undesirables to be placed on the outskirts of town, or any other script by Carlo Rim.[6]

One soon realizes that what particularly interests Carbonnaux is, strictly speaking, neither the Feydeau-esque plot nor the fantastic situations, nor even the nature of his characters. Rather, once a slightly bizarre character is in a given situation, what interests him is in a sense to pit the character, the actor, against his own role, to make him struggle, to let him struggle, forcing the note if necessary. The general tone, therefore, is one of monologue rather than conversation, and this explains why Carbonnaux is not in the least troubled at having to use – producer *oblige* – such rigidly typed actors as Darry Cowl, de Funès, Jean Richard, Max Revol or Jacques Duby. Where a director of lesser talent would be content simply to record a comic act well tried in cabaret, Norbert Carbonnaux manages to go beyond this cabaret style and, in so far as he adapts himself to it without ulterior motive, dislocates reality without robbing it of its own virtues. As proof, I need cite only the scene in which Jacques Duby mimes the finish of the sweepstake sitting astride a stool: imitates, I should say simply, because Marceau[7] has nothing to do with this curious actor, who is neither frankly good nor frankly bad, neither sad nor funny, but something else, perhaps simply Jacques Duby in flesh and blood as the cinema presents him. The film is not without its indecencies, but it is also not without rigour. For my part, I would like to see Jacques Duby in a film based on Raymond Queneau's *Loin de Rueil*, whose anti-poetry ought to suit him better. The best shot, too, in Louis de Funès's already lengthy career is in *Courte Tête*: the one where, mouth ghastly after a night of orgy and dazzled by the daylight, he wakes one morning in a Left Bank hotel and for a second rails from the bottom of his heart against the shabby life of second-rate swindler for which fate has cast him.

If Norbert Carbonnaux, in short, has not yet made his *Femmes Savantes*, he has at least made his *Mariage Forcé*.[8] Were I a producer, this would be enough to make me take three to one on Carbonnaux.

18: Dictionary of French Film-makers

[The four notes following, taken from a special issue of *Cahiers du Cinéma*, were written by Godard]

Robert Bresson

In the world of today, whatever the domain, France can now shine only through exceptional works. Robert Bresson illustrates this rule in the cinema. He is the French cinema, as Dostoievsky is the Russian novel and Mozart is German music. Listen to him: 'A good craftsman loves the board he planes. . . . There is a sublime awkwardness which remains indifferent to virtuosity – it is from this defect that emotion is born in the spectator, an emotion similar to that which guides us when we do something our skill condemns. . . . My craft is an apprenticeship; which does not mean something which can be taught. . . . The film is a perfect example of the work which demands a style; it needs an author, a signature. . . . One must break with the prejudice against simplicity. . . . Know how to choose one's tools, and often choose the wrong ones provided one knows they are wrong. . . . One must withhold and give.'

Norbert Carbonn(e)aux

With each new film he changes the spelling of his name. Nevertheless his style persists, a little muddled but personal, slack but mercurial; a style more *Rue Caumartin* than *Rue de l'Estrapade*,[1] which indicates both his limitations and his ambitions – which are vast. Intelligent enough to become commercial, he was able to put everyone in his pocket with *Courte Tête*, a film which he doesn't like all that much but which at last gave him a free hand. Let us back Carbonnaux for a place[2] – between Joffé and Boisrond.

Roger Leenhardt

The most subtle film theoretician[3] in France. He hates paradoxes, but creates them. He hates false arguments, but offers them. He hates the cinema, but loves it. He doesn't like good films, but makes them.

Jacques Tati

With him, French neo-realism was born. *Jour de Fête* resembled *Rome, Open City* in inspiration. Less liked because more reticent, *Hulot*, too, invited us to savour in secret the bitterness and the pleasures of life. Yes, this moon-man[4] is a poet, as Tristan the Hermit[5] once was. He sees problems where there are none, and finds them. He is capable of filming a beach scene simply to show that the children building a sandcastle drown the sound of the waves with their cries. He will also shoot a scene just because at that moment a window is opening in a house away in the background, and a window opening – well, that's funny. This is what interests Tati. Everything and nothing. Blades of grass, a kite, children, a little old man, anything, every-

thing which is at once real, bizarre and charming. Jacques Tati has a feeling for comedy because he has a feeling for strangeness. A conversation with him is impossible. He is, *par excellence*, an anti-theoretician. His films are good in spite of his ideas. Made by anyone else, *Jour de Fête* and *Hulot* would be nothing. Having become with these two films the best French director of comedy since Max Linder, Jacques Tati may with his third, *Mon Oncle*, become quite simply the best.

19: *The Wrong Man*

First Act. The Stork Club, as everyone knows, is one of the most sophisticated rendezvous in New York. Air-conditioning, whiff of Havanas, hi-fi lipstick . . . but the camera, in the room which is emptying behind the credits, is focused not on the neurotic stars, nor on the millionaires out on the town. It gradually draws closer to the mild little orchestra playing a languid blues. The Stork Club closes. Christopher Balestrero (Henry Fonda) plucks a last chord, puts away his double-bass, and, after wishing the doorman good night, leaves. Just then, because of the angle at which the scene is shot, two policemen seem to close in on him. It is just chance. They pass him and continue on their beat. In this shot Hitchcock is symbolizing, even more than Balestrero's imminent arrest, the primordial role which will be played by chance in *The Wrong Man*, leaving its unmistakable mark on every foot of it. Psychology, in the usual sense of the word, matters little to the director of *The Man Who Knew Too Much*: all that counts here are the twists of destiny.

Hitchcock, moreover, playing the game and playing it fair, has warned the spectator even before the credits. In violently contrasted lighting, one sees his tubby silhouette take a few steps, then stop. A muted, humble voice speaks: 'This film is unlike any of my other films. There is no suspense. Nothing but the truth.' One must read between the lines. The only suspense in *The Wrong Man* is that of chance itself. The subject of this film lies less in the unexpectedness of events than in their probability. With each shot, each transition, each composition, Hitchcock does the only thing possible for the rather paradoxical but compelling reason that he could do anything he liked. 'Che sera, sera', because What Will Be Has Been.

To return to the story. Balestrero – Manny to his friends – takes the subway home to sleep the sleep of the just. During the journey, he annotates the racing results in his paper. He sometimes gambles small sums, more for something to do than from a lust to win. When his wife Rose (Vera Miles) asks him about it, he says that the horses interest him less than seeing how much he might have won or lost on imaginary bets, which he often makes for his own amusement and because he enjoys calculating, which, as he says, is his business as a musician.* It is worth noting in passing that none of the shots of the newspaper Balestrero is reading in the subway is expendable. Throughout his entire career, Hitchcock has never used an unnecessary shot.

* This character played by Henry Fonda is reminiscent of the reporter in *Rear Window* in his semi-inertia and his taste for playing – like the bourgeois family in *Shadow of a Doubt* – the detective of thrillerdom.

Even the most anodyne of them invariably serve the plot, which they enrich rather as the 'touch' beloved of the Impressionists enriched their paintings. They acquire their particular meaning only when seen in the context of the whole. In the newspaper, for instance, we are shown an automobile advertisement. We realize that Balestrero has a wife and two children because a young woman and two children are grouped round the car, making our unassuming hero smile. Another, even better, example: in the paper there is also an advertisement for an insurance company. This shot explains why Balestrero promptly thinks of borrowing on his insurance policy when Rose, suffering with a wisdom tooth, asks him for three hundred dollars to pay the dentist. Closing the discussion with Rose, who is already in bed, comes the first of five or six marvellous close-ups which illuminate the film with brilliant flashes worthy of Murnau, not to mention Dreyer. After having gently, femininely one might say, complained about her teeth, Rose readily lets herself be persuaded that she is the sweetest wife in the world. She asks Manny to be good and let her go to sleep. Reaction shot and long close-up of Henry Fonda staring abstractedly, pondering, thinking, being. In connection with this, there is a similar close-up in an important scene in the last reel but one, after Rose's examination by a psychiatrist,* when Balestrero decides to send Rose, now mad, to the best clinic he can find. The beauty of each of these close-ups, with their searching attention to the passage of time, comes from the sense that necessity is intruding on triviality, essence on existence. The beauty of Henry Fonda's face during this extraordinary second which becomes interminable is comparable to that of the young Alcibiades described by Plato in *The Banquet*. Its only criterion is the exact truth. We are watching the most fantastic of adventures because we are watching the most perfect, the most exemplary, of documentaries. These two close-ups are morally bound to end in the same way. In one, Balestrero tells the psychiatrist, 'I want the best for her.' Manny loves Rose even more because her fears for their happiness in this life have driven her mad – an irrefutable proof of their love for each other. In the other, the close-up ends with a pan on Fonda as he bends to kiss Vera Miles in the hollow of her neck.

The following morning, while pacifying his squabbling sons, Balestrero decides to ask the insurance company how much money he can borrow on Rose's policy. But as he enters the insurance office, a clerk thinks she recognizes him as the man who held up the office a few months ago. Alerted, the police are waiting for Manny outside his house and take him away for questioning without giving him time to tell Rose. At the police-station he learns that he is suspected of not one, but a whole series of hold-ups in local stores. The sums stolen are small – thirty, forty-five, seventy dollars. But the sense of a machine grinding inexorably on is made even stronger by the fact that the police, witnesses and décor are all rather grey, seedy and weird. Here the script effortlessly acquires that naturalness in invention

* Hitchcock handles this scene less satirically than Rossellini does an almost identical one in *Europa 51* when Ingrid Bergman refuses to answer a psychiatrist.

which distinguished all Griffith's films. As a result, a simple procedure like the reverse angle shot recovers its original effectiveness, thanks to the 'truth' of the plot's premises. The shot changes are conditioned solely and simply by changes in viewpoint. For instance, when the two insurance company ladies have to pick out Balestrero from a line of suspects, a lesser director might have used a lateral tracking shot as they count 'One, two, three, four', alternating between the women and the police, and coming to rest each time on Fonda, who is fourth in the identity parade. But this way we would be given only the separate viewpoints of the women, the police and the innocent suspect. Hitchcock gives us them all rolled into one. We hear, but do not see, the women counting to four; the camera turns away from Fonda for a shot of the police chief, whose eyes move four times in succession. A close-up of the inspector would also have been a mistake, for it is not his point of view which matters (his eyes move with professional detachment, without expression) but Balestrero's, whom one imagines to be terrified precisely by this mechanical response.

Even more than a moral lesson, *The Wrong Man* is a lesson in *mise en scène* every foot of the way. In the example I have just cited, Hitchcock was able to assemble the equivalent of several close-ups in a single shot, giving them a force they would not have had individually. Above all – and this is the important thing – he did it deliberately and at precisely the right moment. When necessary, he will also do the reverse, using a series of rapid close-ups as the equivalent of a master shot. Hitchcock makes us experience the taking of fingerprints – that mark of shame, once burned into the accused's flesh by an executioner with a red-hot iron – with terrible immediacy. Thumb, index, second finger inked, the policeman's face, Fonda dazed, distortion of the wrist as the fingers are pressed on the card, the shots overlapping each other because they are cut exclusively with the movement, in a rapid, frenzied montage reminiscent of *Mr Arkadin.*

The lull which follows, as his pockets are emptied before he spends his first night in prison, merely emphasizes the physical and moral vacuum in which Balestrero finds himself with strength enough only to see, to register. This explains why, immediately after this, Hitchcock resorts to the most elementary of techniques for Balestrero's arrival in his cell. What might have seemed supreme affectation coming from the most celebrated of camera virtuosi is in fact a proof of his unpretentiousness. As this adventure is *lived*, he presents it, like Bresson, without embellishment. Balestrero enters his cell, he looks at the bed – reverse angle of the bed; the washbasin – reverse angle of the washbasin; he looks up – reverse angle of the ceiling and wall; he looks at the bars – reverse angle of the bars. We realize that he is seeing without looking (Lieutenant Fontaine[1] does the exact opposite), just as during the trial he hears without listening. Once again Alfred Hitchcock proves that the cinema today is better fitted than either philosophy or the novel to convey the basic data of consciousness. Balestrero leans wearily against the wall, as though drunk with shame. He shuts his eyes firmly,

trying for a second to pull himself together. Framing him in medium shot, the camera begins to describe increasingly rapid circles round him in an axis perpendicular to the wall against which he is leaning. This gyratory movement serves as a transition to the following shot, which shows Balestrero being brought into court the following morning to determine, according to the American custom, whether he will be sent to trial or not.

As so often, it is in these transitions that Hitchcock analyses feelings and subjective impressions too insignificant to find their way into an important scene. Through this camera movement he manages to express a purely physical trait: the contraction of the eyelids as Fonda closes them, the force with which they press on the eyeballs for a fraction of a second, creating in the sensory imagination a vertiginous kaleidoscope of abstractions which only an equally extravagant camera movement could evoke successfully. A film comprising only such notations would be nothing; but one in which they are thrown into the bargain – that film is everything.

Since *Rear Window*, Hitchcock has deliberately multiplied this sort of 'epidermic' effect, and if he relegates the plot thread to the background, he does so the better to reveal its palpable beauty by fits and starts. These neo-realist notations are never gratuitous. They are so many precipitates of a body whose nature – to paraphrase La Bruyère – reveals itself once thrown into the battle of the world.

To look around oneself is to live free. So the cinema, which reproduces life, must film characters who look around them. The tragedy of Christopher Emmanuel Balestrero is that he can no longer look around. And Hitchcock is right to claim that *The Wrong Man* is not a suspense film like his previous ones, because it is the reverse. The suspense no longer even stems from the fact that what one knew would happen does happen, as in *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, but on the contrary from the fact that what one was afraid of happening does not finally happen. Poor Clouzot, who still believes in Fantomas,[2] whereas in *The Wrong Man* the terror arises because suspense itself is the phantom.

Admirable in this respect is the scene, beautifully shot by Robert Burks,[3] where the police-van taking Balestrero to the courthouse crosses a suspension-bridge: a small black silhouette rattling along in the shadow of the huge girders and strangely reminiscent of Nosferatu's carriage arriving in the land of phantoms. Manny, in fact, no longer really knows whether it is he or other people who have become ghosts. The few shots of streets flashing by one after another before he sees his wife again in the courtroom seem, both to him and to us, like a mirage. Rose herself is a mirage. She can be glimpsed dimly in the background when Balestrero is refused bail because he cannot raise the necessary 7,500 dollars. Along with other prisoners he is taken to the prison on Long Island while waiting to appear before the District Attorney. Insulted and injured: this might be the Dostoievskian subtitle to the Second and Third Acts, which end with Balestrero once again being imprisoned among the common law criminals.

The bad dream has become reality. In *I Confess*, Father Logan refused to talk. In *The Wrong Man*, Balestrero comes to mistrust language itself, first from shame, then from lucidity. In the world of detention which becomes his, he no longer looks at anything but the feet of the man walking in front of him. Here Hitchcock repeats the technique of tracking backwards, followed by a reverse angle track forward, used in the last scene of *I Confess* when Montgomery Clift moves towards O. E. Hasse. Can one blame him? No, because in the scene where the insurance company manageress looks at Fonda over a typist's shoulder, this is also an effect already used in *I Confess*, where Karl Malden watches, over a subordinate's shoulder, Anne Baxter talking to Montgomery Clift. Another effect, this time from *The Man Who Knew Too Much* – the lateral tracking shot over notes of music in close-up – is repeated here when Manny, at the police-station, rereads the note which the police dictated to him and notices that he has made the same spelling mistake as the real criminal. It is worth noting, however, that in *The Wrong Man* these three effects are used at less critical moments than in the earlier films, and strengthen these moments all the more because they are unassumingly placed.* There can be no better proof that Hitch never repeats a device without being perfectly aware of cause and effect. Today he uses his great discoveries as aesthetic conclusion rather than postulate.

Thus, the treatment of a scene in a single shot has never been better justified than during the second imprisonment when Manny, seen from the back, enters his cell: the steel door closes behind him, cutting off the camera's view, which then reframes him through the spy-hole. A few minutes pass. Manny, a genuine 'dead man on leave',[4] seems completely amorphous. Then one hears off-screen cries of 'Balestrero! Balestrero!', growing louder and louder. Manny faces the camera, which retreats to frame the door again with Manny's eyes seen in the CinemaScope-shaped spy-hole. This composition repeats the one where Manny, seated between the two policemen after his arrest, sees the driver's eyes watching him in the driving-mirror of the Chevrolet. Repeats it, but reverses its meaning. The camera retreats before Manny after having pushed him into the cell. A first miracle enters the lists. The film seesaws completely.

Fourth Act. Manny is released on bail. The money has been paid by his brother-in-law, waiting for him outside with Rose, who now becomes the central character for the rest of the film. Hitchcock indicates this by a single shot. While Balestrero is reunited with his sons, Rose telephones a lawyer – and the director lingers over this telephone call. Pointlessly, it would seem. But not so. It is in this shot that we find once again the favourite transference of guilt theme of the director of *Strangers on a Train*.

In *The Wrong Man*, the transference no longer resides in the innocent man's assumption of the real murderer's crime, but in the exchange of Manny's liberty against Rose's. As the accusation is false, the transference

* In the same way, the enormously long tracking shot which ends *Young and Innocent* was repeated in *Notorious*, but in the middle of the film.

is false; or rather, a transference of innocence. The wrong man becomes the wrong woman: Hitchcock, we must not forget, is more than anyone else the director of the couple. Rose's innocence is here taken in its original sense of *naïveté*. Rose is innocent enough to believe herself guilty for having doubted her husband's innocence one second; less even than that, for having believed it possible to doubt. She is punished for having feared the possibility of something which never happens, a possibility which she had no cause to fear since she loves her husband.

Naïveté, even at its most candid, often displays the most subtle emotions. Rose's innocence – her stupidity, almost – is the sole cause of her sudden madness. Think of the scene in which, worried about Balestrero's absence, she receives a telephone call from the police, who tell her about the accusations against him. Rose's first reaction is curious: 'I thought it was something like that.' She says precisely what she would never dream of thinking, what she never will think. But the simple fact of having said it is enough to make her doubt herself. The most childlike mind is also the proudest. Rose must pay for the folly of her tongue with madness.

Goethe and Balzac have described heroines like this, who discover in the terrifying logic of their passion, first the cause of, and then a natural pasture for their physical degradation.* A modern Odile or Honorine,[5] Rose does all she can to help Manny find the alibis their attorney wants to establish. As they were on holiday at the time of the hold-ups, they hunt for the people they played cards with so as to be able to refute the evidence. During the quest, Rose, alas, cannot prevent herself from gradually realizing that she is helping her husband more out of duty than from the natural inclination of her heart. The Fourth Act ends with the eruption into the open of this discovery, which had been gnawing Rose from within. Manny learns that his last witness is dead. Rose bursts into hysterical laughter. A *coup de théâtre*? No. As Aristotle says: it is probable that many things happen against probability. If Rose goes mad from remorse, it is because it is logical that madness should happen against logic.

Each crucial scene in *The Wrong Man* has in effect its respondent, its 'double', which justifies it on the narrative level while at the same time 'redoubling' its intensity on the dramatic level.† Rose's burst of laughter echoes that of the little girls who now live in the apartment belonging to one of the missing witnesses. The domestic scene where she hits Balestrero is the double – the negative – of the one at the beginning of the film in which she jokingly expresses mild doubts about the probability of their being happy in this world.

* Vera Miles's character, though more extreme, here reminds one of those played by Ingrid Bergman in *Notorious* and *Under Capricorn*.

† To cite at random: the two imprisonments; the two handwriting tests at the police-station; two conversations with Rose in the kitchen; the two hearings; apart from the credit sequence, the Stork Club appears twice; Manny goes twice to the clinic, twice to the lawyer, twice with the two policemen into two shops for identification; the spy-hole duplicating the driving-mirror; the insurance company is in the same building as the lawyer's office; the two miracles happening on Fonda's face; Bernard Herrman's score is based on two notes, etc.

The arbitrary nature of the situation is obviously echoed by the direction. The blow in which Fonda is hit by a brush is handled in four extremely rapid shots, in which one only sees the start and finish of the gesture: Rose with the brush, Fonda, the broken mirror, Fonda's injured forehead . . . the montage is almost that of *Ballet mécanique*,[6] though conspicuously restoring its fortunes. More: Hitchcock shows us that a technical discovery is pointless unless it is accompanied by a formal conquest in whose crucible it can shape the mould which is called 'style'. To the question 'What is art?', Malraux has already given a precise reply: 'that by which forms become style'.

Fifth and last Act. Close-up of the rosary which Balestrero is telling under the table while his attorney O'Connor, playing at being the Perry Mason of Stanley Gardner's novels, attempts to make the witnesses for the prosecution contradict themselves.* By quibbling over details, he achieves his aim. A member of the jury, exasperated by the discussion, stands up and asks the judge to stop these silly goings-on. O'Connor seizes his chance, and invokes a breach of procedure to claim a mistrial. His point is upheld. A premonitory sign of the second miracle.

Still released on bail, Manny returns home. His mother has been looking after things during Rose's absence at the clinic. He regrets that the trial has been adjourned. The false accusation weighs on him even more heavily than if it were true. However, he tells his mother, he has prayed God to help him. One should not ask God for help she replies, but for strength. In his room, getting ready to go to the Stork Club, Manny thinks about what she has said: ask God for strength. Close-up of Fonda knotting his tie. Close-up of a picture of Christ. Another close-up of Fonda looking at the picture which becomes a superimposition: behind Fonda's face appears a shot of a street with a man in a raincoat and felt hat walking towards the camera until he comes into matching close-up. His features seem about to coincide with those of Fonda, his chin to overlap Fonda's, his nose to melt into Fonda's . . . but no, the superimposition vanishes. And we are left with the real criminal before our eyes as the camera pans with him while he attempts another hold-up. The transition here is no longer a hinge articulating the story, but the mainspring of the drama whose theme it paraphrases.

The real criminal, apprehended thanks to the cool nerve of a shopkeeper's wife, is taken away in his turn to the police-station. The officer who had interrogated Manny passes the man in the corridor, leaves the station, takes a few steps, pauses, and we realize that he understands that Balestrero is innocent. 'Okay, Manny?' he asks, after sending for him. 'Okay,' replies Fonda with a wonderful smile.

The last scene of the film shows Balestrero at the clinic. In spite of the good news, Rose is far from cured. 'I was hoping for a miracle', says the disappointed Manny. 'Miracles do happen,' replies a trim nurse, 'you just have to know how to wait.' Two years later, we learn in an epilogue, Rose is cured and living happily at home with her family. Draw your own conclusion.

* The justification of this clever attorney's manœuvre is that one of the secretaries – the second witness called – makes an accidental slip when she is asked to point out Fonda, who is seated, and says, 'That's him standing over there.' O'Connor tries to provoke the witnesses into more of these mistakes.

20: *Sait-on jamais?*

It would be a mistake to commend *Sait-on jamais?* simply because this French film is as resolutely modern as *Et Dieu . . . créa la femme.* Roger Vadim is 'with it'. Agreed. His colleagues, for the most part, are still missing the point. Also agreed. But one shouldn't admire Vadim simply because he does naturally what should long ago have been the ABC of the French cinema. What could be more natural, really, than to 'breathe the air of today'? We no longer admire a Maserati or the Leduc 022 for the same reasons that our grandparents admired a de Dion-Bouton or Clément Ader's 'chauve-souris'. So it is pointless to compliment Vadim on being ahead of his time, because all that has happened is that everyone else is behind while he is up to date. An excellent reason, you may say, for proving the theorem which proposes Vadim as the best of the young French directors working today. Reason necessary, I would reply, but not sufficient. So let us look for sufficient evidence to prove this theorem. Where to find it? In *Sait-on jamais?* Is it there? It is.

Let's look at the scenario first. The idea is taken from an unpublished novel[1] written by Vadim about ten years ago. On the suggestion of his producer Raoul Lévy, Vadim transposed the action from Paris to Venice. He also threw in a detective story in order to use up a novel whose rights Lévy had acquired. This sort of thing is common practice in the film industry: difficult to know whether to laugh or cry.

So we are in Venice in 1957, a Venice admirably enhanced by Armand Thirard's photography and in which three men embark on a metaphorical poker-game with a young French girl at stake. Sophie (Françoise Arnoul) is about twenty-five. It's the awkward age when a pretty woman is still desperately anxious to be thought of as a naughty girl.[2] Sophie is mean only because she is naïve, cruel because she is weak. Her favourite lover, Sforzi (Robert Hossein), has passed her on as an expression of his gratitude to Baron von Bergen, whose strong-arm man he had been in the biggest fraud of the Second World War: the circulation of forged sterling banknotes by the government of the Third Reich. Von Bergen (O. E. Hasse), a world-weary sexagenarian, wants to finish his life in peace and quiet. Like all old Germans, he has become a moralist with age. He now prefers the contemplation of crime to crime itself. He takes up with Sophie, but almost paternally. The pleasure he derives from her is disinterested. To caress the girl or surprise her in the bath means little to him. Von Bergen simply needs to know that she is on hand, and that's all. She can make love with anybody and everybody she likes, provided she comes to say goodnight before going out. All would be well that ended well but for Michel (Christian Marquand), a rather drab journalist who becomes enamoured of Sophie at a fleapit showing a Gerald McBoing-Boing cartoon. The affair between Michel and Sophie, in fact,

gallops along all the faster because 'when he kisses her, she feels as though she had been running'. In so doing she runs up against the fury of the Baron, who tolerates passing fancies but not liaisons which may be dangerous. And as there is something of Laclos[3] in him, von Bergen encourages Sforzi to put this charming cut-price Cleopatra (to whom he has secretly left the two thousand million lire deposited, in her name, in the coffers of a Swiss bank) back on the leash again. But villainy breeds bigger villainy. Sforzi's plan is soon laid: to betray the Baron and get Sophie back, so as to marry her and lay his hands on the money. Our blackguard soon wins back poor Sophie's heart. Then he kills von Bergen and prevents Michel from going to the police by threatening to frame him for the crime. Sophie's eyes are finally opened by this wickedness, and she forces Michel to take action. With the aid of a friend from Interpol, they frustrate Sforzi's plot. In the end our two pigeons can no doubt live and love each other tenderly. The last shot of the film shows Françoise Arnoul squaring her shoulders as she stands in a police-launch in the Grand Canal under a Titian grey sky.

Here, admittedly, is a very conventional scenario, no better and no worse, *a priori*, than that for Maurice Labro's *Action immédiate*,[4] for example.

Its only value lies in the extent to which the director has probed the stereotyped characters to turn them into living beings. And Michel, Sophie, von Bergen and Sforzi are alive as no French thriller heroes have ever been (with the exception of those in Jean Renoir's *La Nuit du carrefour*). Vadim's great strength is in fact that he talks only about things he knows well, he deals with characters he sees fifty times a day every day, and above all, as a beginner, he describes himself with all his qualities and defects through these characters. Hence the air of extreme novelty about the dialogue and the incisiveness of a *mise en scène* untroubled by complexes or prejudices.

No doubt this was more true of *Et Dieu . . . créa la femme* than of *Sait-on jamais?* The first was the film of an *auteur*, the second only of a director. As a character, Juliette may have been more exact than Sophie, and Curt Jurgens's character more probable than O. E. Hasse's; but over and above the fact that Brigitte Bardot is a more engaging actress than Françoise Arnoul, and that Curt Jurgens is more at ease in the role of a smooth Côte d'Azur operator than O. E. Hasse as a world-weary forger (Stroheim style), one might retort that the characters played by Christian Marquand and Robert Hossein are infinitely more intriguing and subtle than those portrayed by Trintignant and the same Christian Marquand.* And if one absolutely had to pinpoint the Orson Welles in *Sait-on jamais?*, I would see it less in the compositions or certain deep-focus effects (justified purely by the use of colour) than in the fact that Vadim, like the director of *Mr Arkadin*, pays as much attention to his male as his female characters.

Unlike so many beginners with five years of Cinémathèque viewing behind them, Vadim does not say to himself, 'I'm going to move the camera thus,

* It is worth noting that in *Sait-on jamais?* Vadim has given Marquand the role played by Trintignant in *Et Dieu . . . créa la femme*, while Hossein takes over the one played by Marquand in the earlier film.

and frame the characters so. Now, what are they going to do and say?' Instead, more sensibly, he reasons this way: Michel pulls the curtain and hides Sophie as she lies on the bed, increasing his pleasure at knowing she is there by his displeasure at being unable to see her. How to film this scene? Nothing easier. A shot of Michel pulling the curtain: Sophie can no longer be seen. Change of shot with the camera now in Sophie's place, no longer able to see Michel. Michel opens the curtain. They are together again. It is easy to see from this example that once the characters' motivations are clearly established, *mise en scène* becomes a simple matter of logic. Vadim will become a great director because his scenes are never occasioned by a purely abstract or theoretical idea for a shot; rather it is the *idea of a scene*, in other words a dramatic idea, which occasions the *idea of a shot*.

Another example: the now-celebrated shot from the pigeons' point of view. While Sforzi philosophizes with Michel and Sophie in St Mark's Square amid the hellish noise of pigeon wings, the camera suddenly shifts without warning to the rooftops and looks down on the square from, if I may venture to say so, the viewpoint of Sirius. I would bet that Vadim had not planned this shot, and got the idea for it when he was preparing to shoot the scene.* It is an arbitrary shot, admittedly, but arbitrary *a posteriori*. Its violent beauty redeems its purpose.

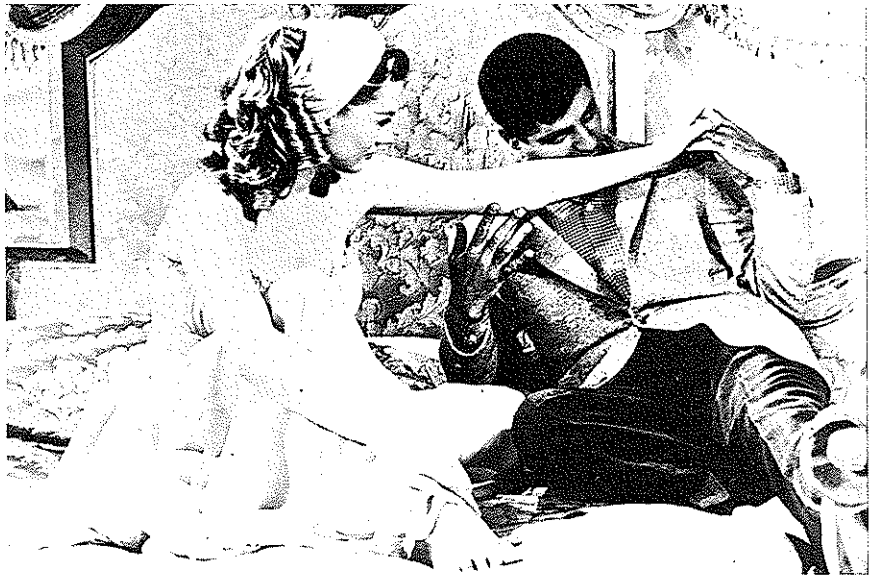
This said, I absolutely agree that Vadim's second film is less personal than his first, more sophisticated, but maybe more successful, more secret too. The characters in *Sait-on jamais?* are filmed after and not before love-making. Cynicism is not the reason why Françoise Arnoul's bath scene is cut off just as she stands up in the bath; it is because the whole of this scene and the next are constructed, not on the fact that Michel is looking at Sophie in her bath, but on the fact that he already has looked at her and so is less interested in her body than her thoughts. In *Et Dieu . . . créa la femme*, tenderness was muffled in eroticism. In *Sait-on jamais?*, it is the reverse.

There remains, for anyone not yet convinced of Vadim's talent, what I would call the photographic proof. I have often noticed that French cameramen – unlike Italians and Americans, who are always consistent – turn out to be brilliant with good directors and disappointing with the rest. Julliard has never done better work than on *Germany Year Zero*, Alékan than on *La Belle et la Bête*, Claude Renoir than with his uncle, Christian Matras than with Max Ophuls. Armand Thirard does not disprove this rule. The camerawork in *Et Dieu . . . créa la femme* and *Sait-on jamais?* is in a different league from all those Clouzot films photographed by the same Thirard.

21: *Hollywood or Bust*

According to Georges Sadoul, Frank Tashlin is a second-rank director because he has never done a remake of *You Can't Take It With You* or *The Awful Truth*. According to me, my colleague errs in mistaking a closed door

* In *La Mort en ce jardin*, Buñuel slips in a similar shot – the Champs-Elysées at night – into the heart of the jungle.



Hollywood or Bust

for an open one. In fifteen years' time people will realize that *The Girl Can't Help It* served then – today, that is – as a fountain of youth from which the cinema now – in the future, that is – has drawn fresh inspiration.

As a matter of fact, the cinema is in any case too resolutely modern for there to be any question of it following any path other than an open one, a perpetual aesthetic inauguration. Its history differs all the more sharply from that of the theatre or the novel in that it is the exact opposite. Whereas literary experts nowadays praise a play or a book only in so far as it conclusively seals all exits round it (cf. James Joyce's *Ulysses* or Samuel Beckett's *Fin de Partie*), we on the other hand praise *To Catch a Thief*, *Eléna et les hommes*, *Voyage to Italy* or *Et Dieu . . . créa la femme* because these films conclusively open new horizons. The moral: explain Frank Tashlin by Frank Tashlin.

Taught in a good school – Hollywood scriptwriting – he is no more frightened of *mise en scène* than Debbie Reynolds was scared by Dick Powell in *Susan Slept Here*. There is an excellent reason for this: before becoming a gagman in cartoons, Frank Tashlin was the author of a number of strips in various papers.* A glance at 'Juliette de mon cœur' in *France-Soir* is enough to tell you that the narrative technique in this strip is years in advance of most current French films. Within a scene, a change of shot is accomplished with a bold inventiveness which Laviron[1] would be well advised to get his I.D.H.E.C. pupils to copy. This bold invention – at once incisive and

* Tashlin has written and illustrated several children's books.

nonchalant – is the trait which makes Tashlin like no one else, not even the latter-day Lubitsch, not even Cukor, since Tashlin would have no use for a Garson Kanin.[2]

All this is the more evident in *Hollywood or Bust* because it is a commercial chore, where a film-maker worthy of the name has the right to betray his secrets quite shamelessly. In this piece of slapstick, Tashlin takes Hollywood at its word. For word, read bust, or Anita Ekberg's bust as it happens. So *Hollywood or Bust* means those of Anita, or Shirley, or Dorothy, or Pat, or Jane,[3] as *Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?* will shortly demonstrate again.

Hollywood or Bust is to *The Girl Can't Help It* as – making due allowance – *L'Ecole des femmes* is to *Le Misanthrope*. Taking Howard Hawks's beloved theme of a journey,* Tashlin indulges a riot of poetic fancies where charm and comic invention alternate in a constant felicity of expression. The plot is thin, certainly, but the merit is all the greater. To have turned Dean Martin into a comedian is feat enough to rate his director a place at the very top.

Louis Jouvet quotes somewhere this definition of the theatre by Alfred de Vigny: a thought which is metamorphosed into a mechanism. So Tashlin, a man of the cinema and of the cinema in colour, does the opposite of Vigny's dictum. The proof is Jerry Lewis's face, where the height of artifice blends at times with the nobility of true documentary.

To sum up. Frank Tashlin has not renovated the Hollywood comedy. He has done better. There is not a difference in degree between *Hollywood or Bust* and *It Happened One Night*, between *The Girl Can't Help It* and *Design for Living*, but a difference in kind. Tashlin, in other words, has not renewed but created. And henceforth, when you talk about a comedy, don't say 'It's Chaplinesque'; say, loud and clear, 'It's Tashlinesque.'

22: *The True Story of Jesse James*

There is no doubt that we owe this remake of Henry King's film[1] to the book by James D. Horan which appeared in 1949. Called *The Desperate Men*, it was a very detailed study of the life of the James Brothers, based on documents from private archives not previously available to the public. But there is also no doubt that Nicholas Ray reacted to these revelations in a completely personal way, very differently from his producer Herbert B. Swope. Where the crafty businessman saw in *The True Story* a means to attract spectators tired of a story which had already been dished up in every conceivable manner, the film-maker on the other hand saw the legend already taking shape behind the true facts, and behind the existence, the essence. Which explains the constant battles between producer and director. Like Orson Welles before him, Nicholas Ray left Hollywood before shooting ended, defeated, slamming the door behind him.

These prefatory remarks are not without point for anyone going to see

* Although the journey from New York to Hollywood corresponds to our own Paris-Côte d'Azur, films like this are impossible in France because the theme of migration came to us from America and we are incapable of handling it with the same naturalness.

The True Story of Jesse James with the dazzling memory of *Rebel Without a Cause* or *Bigger than Life*, to cite only two films, in his eyes. What Ray planned to offer us in his portrait of the celebrated outlaw was probably a more detailed *Rebel Without a Cause*. One only has to know all the facts about Jesse James to be convinced of this.

On 7 September 1876 the James Brothers and their gang robbed the little bank at Northfield. Though planned over a long time, the raid failed because its execution was too indecisive: an indecision stemming from Jesse's increasingly whimsical temperament. The whole town set boldly off in pursuit of the brothers, who soon found themselves alone with a thousand men on their heels. This first failure came after fifteen years of unbroken success which had turned Frank and Jesse from peaceful farmers into redoubtable bandits. The sons of a respectable Mississippi minister, their childhood had been deeply marked by the War of Secession. In 1863, Jesse joined his brother in Quantrill's Raiders, of famous and bloody reputation. There he learned to kill for 'The Cause' in terrible raids against the neighbouring Kansas, traditionally Northern in sympathy. Having become a gang-leader after the conflict ended to settle a personal grievance, Jesse gradually and cold-bloodedly began to pile up murders, still a rebel, but now without a cause.

> Jesse James was a lad that killed many a man,
> He robbed the train at Glendale,
> He took from the rich and gave to the poor,
> He had a hand, a heart, a brain.

So runs the ballad.[2] But reality had a darker face. In association with the Younger Brothers, Frank and Jesse James attacked train after train, farm after farm, plundered bank after bank until the day the employees of the Northfield Bank offered sturdy resistance. This episode was to be a tragic prefiguration of the death of Jesse, shot down with a bullet in his back by his villainous little cousin, Bob Ford. Only then did legend embrace the outlaw, as it had embraced Billy the Kid, also shot in the back by his old friend Sheriff Pat Garrett, or Sam Bass who fell into an ambush after being betrayed by a vile informer. It is certain that Jesse James the beloved[3] was cordially hated during his lifetime. And this is the grey solitary man whose exploits Nicholas Ray wanted to describe.

Even though battles on the set may have finally sabotaged this delicate task, one should not forget the ambition which attended its inception. So the reader is warned. One must judge *The True Story of Jesse James* on its intentions.

That something has gone wrong from the point of view of the production is hardly in doubt; but not the direction, in which each shot carries the indelible mark of the most peculiarly modern of film-makers. What does one mean by this? How does one recognize Nicholas Ray's signature? Firstly, by the compositions, which can enclose an actor without stifling him, and which somehow manage to make ideas as abstract as Liberty and Destiny

both clear and tangible. Then, as Jacques Rivette has noted, by the editing device which is a feature of all Ray's work and which consists of the sudden insertion, in a scene with several characters, of a shot of one of them who is only participating indirectly in the conversation which he is witnessing. Finally, by a sensitivity to décor, which no other American director since Griffith has been able to use so vividly and powerfully. One is hardly likely to forget the twin leap into the river by the James Brothers and their mounts, the attack on the train shot in an almost supernatural atmosphere by the superb Joe MacDonald, or the band of mysterious horsemen clad in white coats, riding at dawn through the plains of Minnesota. No need of false modesty: Nick Ray could go to the cinema to see this film he repudiates.

23: *Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?*

As you can see,* the shooting of an American comedy is a very serious business. Frank Tashlin would be the last to disagree. As he wrote to me: 'The better I know the cinema, the more I realize that it is an art which it is dangerous to take too lightly, even if one is working in comedy. Consequently I become more and more serious with each film. For instance, whereas one of my first successes, *Son of Paleface*, contained 2,857 gags at a conservative estimate, there were only 1,538 in *Artists and Models* and 743 in *The Girl Can't Help It*. As for *Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?*, it will have barely 50. Don't worry, it will still be the funniest film of the year. There is a sacrosanct tradition in Hollywood that the producer should always take precedence over director and scriptwriter. Well, I have decided to upset this *status quo* by reversing the classification. If *Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?* is a big success, I shall be proudest of my script, then of my direction, and last of all of having produced it.'

So we have been warned. Not to be taken too lightly are the adventures of the celebrated star Rita Marlowe (Jayne Mansfield), her coloured poodle Shamroy (named after the cameraman), the humble TV scriptwriter Rock Hunter (Tony Randall), and his fiancée (Betsy Drake) who, in order not to lose him, contrives through various means to acquire as vast a bosom as her rival. After this satire on Hollywood and TV advertising, Tashlin will tackle Boy Scouts and Scout-masters in *Rally Round the Flag, Boys!*[1]

24: *Forty Guns*

Samuel Fuller's most recent film, *Forty Guns*, is not to be released in France. This is cause for bitter regret, because it is without doubt his best film, along with *House of Bamboo*. Each scene, each shot of this savage and brutal Western, shot in black and white CinemaScope in under ten days, is so rich in invention – despite an incomprehensible plot – and so bursting with daring conceptions that it reminds one of the extravagances of Abel Gance and Stroheim, or purely and simply of Murnau. To note some of the most striking:

* This text accompanied a production still of *Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?*

Barbara Stanwyck's brother grabs her to use her as a shield. 'Go on, shoot, you dirty coward' he shouts to Barry Sullivan, who is covering them with his gun. And without hesitation Barry Sullivan calmly shoots Barbara Stanwyck, who crumples up, and then the brother, who falls mortally wounded in his turn. 'Stop shooting, you dirty coward', cries the dying man – Bang! Bang! – 'For pity's sake, stop shooting' – Bang! Bang! – 'Stop shooting, you can see I'm dying' – Bang! Bang! Bang!*

In another scene, Gene Barry is courting ravishing young Eve Brent, making her charming début before the cameras in an eye-shade borrowed from Samuel. Eve sells guns. Jokingly, Gene aims at her. The camera takes his place and we see Eve through the barrel of the gun. Track forward until she is framed in close-up by the mouth of the barrel. Next shot: they are in a kiss.

The best scene lasts only three seconds. Gene Barry and Eve Brent are posing for their wedding photograph. Barbara Stanwyck's brother gallops up on a horse. A shot rings out. Gene Barry sinks into Eve Brent's arms, and she collapses and falls backwards under his weight. One has no idea which of the two lovers has been hit. In the next shot we find out when we see Eve, alive, lying under Gene Barry, dead. Three seconds, yes, but worthy of *Tabu*.

25: Jean Renoir

[In December 1957, *Cahiers du Cinéma* devoted a special issue to Jean Renoir, one of their favourite directors. Godard wrote the three following notes.]

La Nuit du carrefour

His most mysterious film. An unintentional mystery, perhaps, as Jean Mitry lost three reels after shooting was completed and the film had to be edited without them. But the reason does not alter the result. Namely: Dostoievskian characters in the décor of *Une Ténébreuse Affaire*.[1] Because Simenon = Dostoievsky + Balzac, unabashed fans of Inspector Maigret will cry. Yes, I would retort, but *La Nuit du carrefour* proves that this equation is only valid if and because Renoir *verifies* it. And *Trois Chambres à Manhattan* will prove it all over again if the film is ever made, just as it has already been proved *ad absurdum* by other films adapted from Simenon novels by hack directors, known and unknown. In his transposition of *La Nuit du carrefour* to the screen, the author of *Orvet*[2] has turned the novelist of *Suicidés* and *Touristes de Bananes*[3] into the one who wrote *Mouchette* and *Un Crime*.[4]

Watching this strange and poetic film, one experiences fear. A fear which is not yet fear, but which nevertheless already comprises its own explanation. In the same way, Pierre Renoir-Maigret solves his problem before it has even been posed. At last we can understand the exclamation which Simenon places in Maigret's mouth at the end of each investigation: 'Simple. Why didn't I think of it sooner!' In 'chiaroscuro' there is 'chiaro' – 'clear'. Thanks to Renoir, we have no difficulty in sharing that clarity.

* In the version of *Forty Guns* which was eventually shown in France ten years later, this scene was cut.

Gunshots shattering the darkness; the purr of a Bugatti setting off in pursuit of the traffickers (a sublime subjective tracking shot through the streets of the sleeping village); the air of confusion, craziness or corruption about the villagers wandering on the main road; Winna Winfred with her English accent and the curious eroticism of her drug-addicted, philosophizing Russian; Pierre Renoir's lazy eagle eye; the smell of rain and of fields bathed in mist: every detail, every second of each shot makes *La Nuit du carrefour* the only great French thriller, or rather, the greatest French *adventure* film of all.

Swamp Water

The second American Renoir to be shown after the Liberation. There begins the misunderstanding: a misunderstanding which was to turn the most admired of French film-makers into the most maltreated. The crowning paradox is that it was Renoir's warmest partisans who resolutely threw the first stone: a stone thrown earlier at *La Règle du Jeu* which, after five years of upheaval in the world, is still barely accepted, let alone understood.

Swamp Water can also boast of having revolutionized Hollywood in the long term. For the first time a big studio agreed to the idea – very reasonable, after all – of not shooting exteriors in interiors. *Swamp Water* follows the same principle as *Toni*, with twenty years of experience behind it. This is no longer a question of being willing to take risks, but the audacity of absolute assurance.

Booed at the Biarritz when it was first shown in Paris, *Swamp Water* is one of the seven or eight major turning-points in Renoir's career. The disconcerting thing is that this is not the start of a new turn, but its end. And everyone knows that when coming out of a bend, the champion presses down hard on the accelerator so as to set off again at top speed. Which is what Renoir does on an aesthetic plane.

Genius, Malraux wrote somewhere, is born like fire. *Of what it consumes*. If *La Règle du Jeu* was misunderstood at the time, it is because it consumed, destroyed, *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange*. And *Swamp Water* in its turn because it consumed *La Règle du Jeu*. In the same way, *Eléna* will be dismissed by those who praise *French-Cancan*. Mistakenly, because Renoir demonstrates constantly that the only way not to be late is always to be early. So he destroys, even as one is still admiring the temerity of his structure.

Eléna et les hommes

To say that Renoir is the most intelligent of directors comes to the same thing as saying that he is French to his fingertips. And if *Eléna et les hommes* is 'the' French film *par excellence*, it is because it is the most intelligent of films. Art and theory of art, at one and the same time; beauty and the secret of beauty; cinema and apologia for cinema.

No doubt the beautiful Eléna is merely a provincial Muse – but a Muse in search of the absolute. For in filming the descent of Venus among men, for the space of an hour and a half Renoir imposes the view of Olympus on that

of mortal man. Before our eyes, the metamorphosis of the gods ceases to be a classroom tag and becomes a spectacle of profoundly moving comedy. Through the most splendid of paradoxes, in fact, in *Eléna* the immortals seek to die. To be sure of living, one must be sure of loving; and to be sure of loving, one must be sure of dying. This is what Eléna discovers in the arms of her men; and this is the strange, harsh moral of this modern fable in the guise of a comic opera.

Thirty years of improvisation have made Renoir the world's finest technician. He achieves in one shot what others do in ten; and where they make do with one, Renoir can do without. Never has a film been so free as *Eléna*. But deep down inside of things, freedom is necessity. And never, too, has a film been so logical.

Eléna is Renoir's most Mozartian film. Not so much on the surface, like *La Règle du Jeu*, but in its philosophy. The Renoir who had just finished *French-Cancan* and was preparing *Eléna* is, spiritually, a little the same man as the one who had just finished the Concerto for Clarinet and was beginning *The Magic Flute*. In content there is the same irony, the same disgust; in form, the same daring and masterly simplicity. To the question 'What is cinema?', *Eléna* answers – 'More than cinema.'

26: *Bitter Victory*

There was theatre (Griffith), poetry (Murnau), painting (Rossellini), dance (Eisenstein), music (Renoir).* Henceforth there is cinema. And the cinema is Nicholas Ray.

Why does one remain unmoved by stills from *Bitter Victory* when one knows that it is the most beautiful of films? Because they express nothing. And for good reason. Whereas a single still of Lillian Gish is sufficient to conjure up *Broken Blossoms*, or of Charles Chaplin for *A King in New York*, Rita Hayworth for *Lady from Shanghai*, even Ingrid Bergman for *Eléna*, a still of Curt Jurgens lost in the Tripolitan desert or of Richard Burton wearing a white burnous bears no relation to Curt Jurgens or Richard Burton on the screen. A gulf yawns between the still and the film itself. A gulf which is a whole world. Which? The world of the modern cinema.

* This classification may seem arbitrary, and above all, paradoxical. But it isn't so. Certainly Griffith was the sworn enemy of the theatre, but the theatre of his time. The aesthetic of *Birth of a Nation* or *One Exciting Night* is the same as that of *Richard III* or *As You Like It*. If Griffith invented cinema, he invented it with the same ideas that Shakespeare brought to the theatre. He invented 'suspense' with the same ideas that Corneille brought to 'suspension'.

Similarly, to say that Renoir is close to music and Rossellini to painting, when it is well known that the former adores the boards and the latter hates canvases, is simply to say that the man who made *The River* has an affinity with Mozart, and the man who made *Europa 51*, with Velazquez. To make a crude simplification: one attempts to portray the soul; the other, character.

This, of course, is an attempt to define film-makers by what is deepest inside them, by the 'quality' of their 'invention'. In a Renoir film, for instance, the figure three corresponds to a 'tempo', whereas with Eisenstein the same figure corresponds to a spatial obsession. Eisenstein is dance because, like it, he seeks within the heart of people and things the immobility within movement.

Bitter Victory: Curt Jurgens and Richard Burton

It is in this sense that *Bitter Victory* is an abnormal film. One is no longer interested in objects, but in what lies between the objects and which becomes an object in its turn. Nicholas Ray forces us to consider as real something one did not even consider as unreal, something one did not consider at all. *Bitter Victory* is rather like one of those drawings in which children are asked to find the hunter and which at first seem to be a meaningless mass of lines.

Not that one should say 'behind the British Commando raid on Rommel's HQ lies a symbol of our time', because there is no behind and no before. *Bitter Victory* is what it is. One does not find reality on the one hand – the conflict between Lieutenant Keith and Captain Brand – and fiction on the other – the conflict between courage and cowardice, fear and lucidity, morality and liberty, or what-have-you. No. It is no longer a question of either reality or fiction, or of one transcending the other. It is a question of something quite different. What? The stars, maybe, and men who like to look at them and dream.

Magnificently edited, *Bitter Victory* is exceptionally well acted by Curt Jurgens and Richard Burton. With *Et Dieu . . . créa la femme*, this makes twice one can believe in a character created by Jurgens. As for Richard Burton, who has acquitted himself well enough in all his previous films, good or bad, when directed by Nicholas Ray he is absolutely sensational. A kind of

Wilhelm Meister 1958? No matter. It would mean little enough to say that *Bitter Victory* is the most Goethian of films. What is the point of redoing Goethe, or of doing anything again – *Don Quixote* or *Bouvard et Pécuchet*, *J'accuse* or *Voyage au bout de la nuit* – since it has already been done? What is love, fear, contempt, danger, adventure, despair, bitterness, victory? What does it matter compared to the stars?

Never before have the characters in a film seemed so close and yet so far away. Faced by the deserted streets of Benghazi or the sand-dunes, we suddenly think for the space of a second of something else – the snack-bars on the Champs-Elysées, a girl one liked, everything and anything, lies, the treachery of women, the shallowness of men, playing the slot-machines. For *Bitter Victory* is not a reflection of life, it is life itself turned into film, seen from behind the mirror[1] where the cinema intercepts it. It is at once the most direct and the most secret of films, the most subtle and the crudest. It is not cinema, it is more than cinema.

How can one talk of such a film? What is the point of saying that the meeting between Richard Burton and Ruth Roman while Curt Jurgens watches is edited with fantastic brio? Maybe this was a scene during which we had closed our eyes. For *Bitter Victory*, like the sun, makes you close your eyes. Truth is blinding.

[As a regular contributor to *Cahiers du Cinéma* from 1956, each year Jean-Luc Godard drew up his list of the ten best films.]

27: The Ten Best Films of 1956

1. *Mr Arkadin* (Orson Welles).
2. *Eléna et les hommes* (Jean Renoir).
3. *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (Alfred Hitchcock).
4. *Bus Stop* (Joshua Logan).
5. *Slightly Scarlet* (Allan Dwan).
6. *The Saga of Anatahan* (Josef von Sternberg).
7. *Un Condamné à mort s'est échappé* (Robert Bresson).
8. *Fear* (Roberto Rossellini).
9. *Bhowani Junction* (George Cukor).
10. *My Sister Eileen* (Richard Quine).

28: The Ten Best Films of 1957

1. *Bitter Victory* (Nicholas Ray).
2. *The Wrong Man* (Alfred Hitchcock).
3. *Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?* (Frank Tashlin).
4. *Hollywood or Bust* (Frank Tashlin).
5. *Les Trois font la paire* (Sacha Guitry).
6. *A King in New York* (Charlie Chaplin).
7. *Beyond a Reasonable Doubt* (Fritz Lang).
8. *The Criminal Life of Archibaldo de la Cruz* (Luis Buñuel).
9. *Sawdust and Tinsel* (Ingmar Bergman).
10. *Saint Joan* (Otto Preminger).

Struggle on Two Fronts, *Arts* and *Cahiers du Cinéma*: February–December 1958

1958 marks a year of cardinal importance in Godard's development: the period of the last shorts before he made A Bout de Souffle, *and of busy critical activity. Godard was in fact writing regularly for both* Arts *and* Cahiers du Cinéma *at the same time.*

29: *The Killing*

This is the film of a good pupil, no more. An admirer of Max Ophuls, Aldrich and John Huston, Stanley Kubrick is still far from being the bright boy heralded by the excited publicity surrounding this little gangster film which makes even *The Asphalt Jungle* look like a masterpiece by comparison. *Kiss Me Deadly* even more so. I shall not mention Ophuls, who would have nothing to do with the matter except that Kubrick claims his influence through irritating movements of the camera resembling those beloved of the director of *Le Plaisir*. But what in Ophuls corresponds to a certain vision of the world, in Kubrick is mere showing-off.

The enterprise is not without its sympathetic side, however. An independent production, *The Killing* was shot quickly and on a low budget. Although the story is not particularly original (robbery of the Los Angeles race-track), and the ending very little better (banknotes fluttering away in the wind after a very badly filmed stroke of bad luck, exactly as in *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*), one must praise the ingenuity of the adaptation: by systematically dislocating the chronology of events, it maintains one's interest in a plot which otherwise never leaves the beaten track. Once one has commended the newsreel-style camerawork and Sterling Hayden, there is little left to do but wait, not too impatiently, for Kubrick's next feature, *Paths of Glory*, which has been very highly praised by the American Press.

30: Mizoguchi

On 24 August 1956 the greatest of Japanese film-makers died in Kyoto. Or, quite simply, one of the greatest of film-makers, as has been proved by the Cinémathèque Française's retrospective devoted to his work. Kenji Mizoguchi was the peer of Murnau, of Rossellini. His *œuvre* is enormous. Two hundred films, so it is said. No doubt there is a good deal of legend about this, and one can be sure that future centuries will bring quite a few *Mizoguchi Monogatari*.[1] But there is also no doubt that Kenji is extraordinary, for he can shoot films in three months that would take a Bresson two years to bring about. And Mizoguchi brings them to perfection.

Farther than the west

Since Japanese films appeared on our screens after the war, an aesthetic dispute has ranged the admirers of Kurosawa (*Rashomon, The Seven Samurai, The Idiot*) against those of Mizoguchi. A dispute made even more furious by the fact that both directors have been frequent prizewinners at festivals. Our thanks are due to Jean-José Richer for having cut authoritatively across the debate: 'This double distinction awarded in strict equality (to *The Seven Samurai* and *Sansho Dayu*, Venice 1954) is unwarranted. Not because of the mobilization of two Golden Lions, but because of the confused values it engenders. There can be no doubt that any comparison between Mizoguchi and Kurosawa turns irrefutably to the advantage of the former. Alone among the Japanese film-makers known to us, he goes beyond the seductive but minor stage of exoticism to a deeper level where one need no longer worry about false prestige' (*Cahiers du Cinéma* 40).

Gallantry and metaphysics

If poetry is manifest in each second, each shot filmed by Mizoguchi, it is because, as with Murnau, it is the instinctive reflection of the film-maker's creative nobility. Like the director of *Sunrise*, the director of *Ugetsu Monogatari* can describe an adventure which is at the same time a cosmogony.

His heroines are all the same, strangely resembling Hardy's Tess of the d'Urbervilles.[2] The most terrible adventures befall them, one after the other. And if Mizoguchi shows a marked predilection for brothels, he refuses – unlike Kurosawa, who is merely a more elegant Ralph Habib – to become trapped by the false glitter of the picturesque. When he re-creates old Japan, he goes beyond tinsel and anecdote to give us the unvarnished truth with a mastery equalled only by a *Francesco, Giullare di Dio*. Never have we seen, seen with our own eyes, the Middle Ages exist with such intensity of atmosphere.

A revolutionary technique of simplicity

Efficacity and sobriety are the characteristics of great film-makers. And Kenji Mizoguchi does not belie this rule. As Philippe Demonsablon pointed out in a pertinent article on *The Life of O'Haru*, his art is to abstain from any solicitation irrelevant to its object, to leave things to present themselves without intervention from the mind except to efface its traces, thus

increasing a thousandfold the efficacity of the objects it presents for our admiration. It is, therefore, a realist art, and the *mise en scène* will be realist.

This simplicity is not without paradox, for it must achieve its austerity through an accumulation of matter. The compositions are guided initially by the laws of movement. But there is no Baroque embellishment, no purpose other than to allow the substance itself to reach us. No image is comic, tragic, fanciful, erotic in itself, and yet is all these things at once. Mizoguchi's art is the most complex because it is the simplest. Camera effects and tracking shots are rare, but when they do suddenly burst into a scene, the effect is one of dazzling beauty. Each crane shot (here Preminger is easily outstripped) has the clean and limpid line of a brush-stroke by Hokusai.

The most wonderful of films

Admired at the time at the Venice Festival, *Ugetsu Monogatari* is Kenji Mizoguchi's masterpiece, and one which ranks him on equal terms with Griffith, Eisenstein and Renoir.

The action takes place at the end of the sixteenth century, during the time of the civil wars. It tells the story of Genjuro, a humble country potter who is bewitched by the beautiful Machiko,[3] and of his brother,[4] a vainglorious brute who dreams of military prowess. After many disappointments in the city, they both return home to spend the rest of their lives in the fields.

Everything which made the power and magnificence of *Chikamatsu Monogatari*, the cool cruelty of *Sketch of Madame Yuki*, the jovial bawdry of *Street of Shame*, the tenderness of *Naniwa Elegy*, is here combined and the effect increased a thousandfold. It is *Don Quixote, The Odyssey* and *Jude the Obscure* rolled into one. An hour and a half of film which seems to last an eternity. Subtlety of *mise en scène* is here carried to its highest degree. Mizoguchi is probably the only director in the world who dares to make systematic use of 180 degree shots and reaction shots. But what in another director would be striving for effect, with him is simply a natural movement arising out of the importance he accords to the décor and the position the actors occupy within it.

Let me quote two examples of technical conjuring tricks which are the acme of art. Genjuro is bathing with the fatal enchantress who has caught him in her net; the camera leaves the rock pool where they are disporting themselves, pans along the overflow which becomes a stream disappearing into the fields; at this point there is a swift dissolve to the furrows, other furrows seem to take their place, the camera continues tranquilly on its way, rises, and discovers a vast plain, then a garden in which we discover the two lovers again, a few months later, enjoying a picnic. Only masters of the cinema can make use of a dissolve to create a feeling which is here the very Proustian one of pleasure and regrets.

Another example. Having killed the enchantress, Genjuro returns home. He does not know that his loving wife, O'Hama,[5] is dead. He enters, looks in all the rooms, the camera panning with him. He moves from one room to the

next, still followed by the camera. He goes out, the camera leaves him, returns to the room and frames O'Hama, in flesh and blood, just at the moment when Genjuro comes in again and sees her, believing (as we do) that he didn't look properly and that his gentle wife really is alive.

The art of Kenji Mizoguchi is to prove that real life is at one and the same time elsewhere and yet here, in its strange and radiant beauty.

31: *Caught*

Seen in a cinema at La Paz as the machine-guns rattled and rebels stormed the Bolivian government palace. This is Max's best American film. Robert Ryan plays a sort of Howard Hughes, brutal and tender, James Mason an admirably sad suburban doctor, and Barbara Bel Geddes a charming provincial gradually corrupted by dollars. As for the technique, it is already *Le Plaisir*.

People have often wondered why Ophuls was so anxious to film *Les Mauvaises Rencontres*. Just see *Caught* and you will understand. The synopsis is in effect the same as that of the Cécil Saint-Laurent novel adapted by Astruc, except that there are only two male characters instead of three. But the basic situation remains the same: a girl arrives in New York and serves her apprenticeship as a city-dweller while passing from one man to the other. The title, *Caught*, is also the moral of this cruel and delicate film. Our modern Eve, admirably played by Barbara Bel Geddes (the Simone Simon of Broadway), is finally well and truly caught after confusing love with what she thought was love and falling into traps she herself had set. *Caught* is a Marianne[1] made in U.S.A., or else simply a Lamiel, Stendhal revised by Marivaux.

32: *The Wayward Bus*

Of all the Victor Vicas films we have seen, this is easily the best. Thirty times better than *Double Destin*, forty times better than *Je reviendrai à Kandara*. This does not mean, alas, that Victor Vicas is getting better. For his latest film, *Count Five and Die*, made in London this winter, is the worst of the lot.

To what, then, do we owe whatever makes *The Wayward Bus* agreeable to watch – no more, but agreeable? To Steinbeck's characters? It seems unlikely, although they are more sympathetic and less aesthetic (less spuriously 'natural', that is to say) than those of *Tortilla Flat* or *Cannery Row*. For myself, I believe that the unexpected charm of certain scenes (the one between Rick Jason and Joan Collins in their room, for instance) comes from what one can call 'The Hollywood Machine'. It is very worn out and often goes wrong nowadays, but it can still deliver the goods. Which it does here.

Produced by that cunning veteran Charles Brackett,[1] and amiably directed by Victor Vicas after having been turned down by all Fox's directors, *The Wayward Bus* has something of the look of hurriedly prepared homework, which is far from displeasing. It is minor art. One would not be unjustified in praising Rick Jason, a new face who will become the Christian Marquand of America; Jayne Mansfield, as a well-rounded and amiable provincial pin-up; Joan Collins, a snack-bar tragedienne; and Dolores Michaels, who deserves a whole film to herself, written for her by John O'Hara.

33: *Le Temps des Oeufs Durs*

It is difficult to analyse Norbert Carbonnaux's comedy style. Pushed in one direction, it would end up as Jacques Tati. Pushed in the other, as Marx Brothers. But as Carbonnaux, one of the laziest of good French directors, never pushes things to their conclusion, one often finds oneself between two stools. With him we are faced with the sort of person who takes twenty-three hours to get out of bed, works like mad for an hour, and then cries 'I've had a terrible day.' The worst of it is, he isn't exaggerating all that much. Put into terms of cinema, this means that Carbonnaux is incredibly lax and lazy at the script stage or in preparing gags, but wakes up during shooting, and by the time it comes to the editing has really collected all his wits. Witness his latest film: *Le Temps des oeufs durs*.

It has an excellent non-subject. Impossible but good. How could a producer have found commercial possibilities in this satire on failure? Difficult to say. But the fact remains that it was a subject imposed on Carbonnaux, whose dream was to do something different. Maybe, though, it is in this dislocation between dream and reality that one can grasp the Carbonnaux mystery. What I mean is that he transposes this dislocation to another level – no longer that of commercial success but of pure *mise en scène*. Curiously, in fact, Norbert Carbonnaux is *a priori* less an *auteur* than a pure *metteur en scène*. But with him more than anyone else, it is because he is first and foremost a *metteur en scène* that he becomes an *auteur*, in other words a complete film-maker. *Le Temps des oeufs durs* takes one even further in this direction than *Courte Tête*. Every quarter of an hour, some dazzling bit of poetic invention (Darry Cowl in the café, Altariba's strip-tease, the hammock, the garage at the end) makes the audience slip the brakes and introduces them into a universe which is semi-fantastic in that it is semi-real. If one had to suggest literary references, it is to Henri Calef one should turn, rather than Raymond Queneau as one might have thought after seeing *Courte Tête*. The director of *Corsaires du Bois de Boulogne* has the same quicksilver irony, the same sharp and caustic touch which prevents laughter even while provoking it, as the author of *L'Italie à la paresseuse*.

34: *Rafles sur la Ville*

One wonders how. And yet the fact remains. This routine little thriller is most engaging. Personally, I rate it third in my list, after *Le Grisbi* and *Rififi*. Why? Simply because French cops are for once shown as ordinary people with the same reactions as anyone else – trying to make a colleague's wife, for instance, if she happens to be pretty. It doesn't happen often, but here, given a hackneyed story, Auguste Le Breton has written some excellent dialogue. All the scenes between the inspector (Michel Piccoli, excellent) and the charming chick from the 16th (Danick Patisson, perfect) have an accuracy of tone,

almost an elegance, which cuts right across the routine production. It is all too rarely in a French film that one finds characters who talk simply for the pleasure of it and not to tell us something. Is Pierre Chenal's direction responsible for all this? It isn't easy to say. There are some good ideas. The end, for instance, when Piccoli, seized by remorse, throws himself on the grenade hurled by Charles Vanel in the police-office, and dies amid his unscathed colleagues. 'A *real* film', says the publicity. I say, 'A real *film*.'

35: *Montparnasse 19*

Is it the passionate life of Amédée Modigliani? One might just as well go and see that of Van Gogh. Is it a chronicle of Paris just after the First World War? Might as well read Maurice Sachs's books. Is it the diary of a visionary painter? Might as well read or see the Country Priest's. Is it the story of an unhappy man, a madman, a blackguard, a genius? Is it an adventure film or a film about love? Above all, is it a film? *Montparnasse 19* offers no answer to this question either. Or rather, it answers with another question: Yes, but after all, what *is* cinema?

If, as the advertising claims, *Montparnasse 19* is the most moving of Becker's films, it is because at each twenty-fourth of a second, close-ups, direct cuts, crane movements, zooms, distorted pans, all pose this question: 'What is cinema?' And because, instead of answering, each shot returns the same piercing question: what is cinema?

The sole greatness of *Montparnasse 19* is that it is not only a film in reverse but the reverse of cinema, just as a photographic negative is the reverse of the positive. Generally speaking, a great film is great because it demonstrates beauty simply by creating it, because it invalidates any questions on the subject by providing an answer at the outset. Welles, Eisenstein, Murnau, all work through affirmations. They do not say, 'I must film that because it is beautiful', but 'It is beautiful because I have filmed it like that.'

Montparnasse 19, quite the opposite, is probably the first film to be, fundamentally, entirely *negative*. It makes no difference that this may be due in part to the many hazards which beset both the preparation and the shooting of the film (the death of Ophuls, supervision by Modigliani's daughter, quarrels with Jeanson, etc.). The fact remains. *Montparnasse 19* will not prove to you that Modi loved Jeanne or that Beatrice loved Modi; nor that Paris is a wonderful city, that women are beautiful and men are weak; nor that love is pleasant, that painting is amusing or that painting is tedious; nor that art is more important than anything else or anything else more important than art. No. *Montparnasse 19* will not prove that $2+2=4$. Its purpose lies elsewhere. Its purpose is the absence of purpose. Its truth, the absence of truth. *Montparnasse 19* will prove to you only that $2-2=0$.

It is wrong to call this the most Bressonian film by the director of the splendid *Rue de l'Estrapade*, because in agreeing to shoot *Montparnasse 19*, he has not yielded to the temptation of the absolute but to the call of the void. *Montparnasse 19* is a vertiginous film. And all things considered, the

project, not without cowardice at the outset, is not without courage on arrival.

Montparnasse 19 is a film of fear. In this sense, it might be subtitled 'the mystery of the film-maker'. For in unwittingly investing Modigliani's unbalanced mind with his own perturbation, Jacques Becker – clumsily, admittedly, but infinitely movingly – allows us to penetrate the secret of artistic creation more effectively than Clouzot did by filming Picasso at work.[1] After all, if a modern novel is fear of the blank page, a modern painting fear of the empty canvas, and modern sculpture fear of the stone, a modern film has the right to be fear of the camera, fear of the actors, fear of the dialogue, fear of the montage. I would give the whole of the post-war French cinema for that one shot, badly acted, badly composed, but sublime, in which Modigliani asks five francs for his drawings on the terrace of the Coupole.

Then, but only then, everything pleases in this displeasing film. Everything rings true in this totally false film. Everything is illuminated in this obscure film. For he who leaps into the void owes no explanation to those who watch.

36: Malraux a Discredit to France?

Without getting too excited about it, and before tumbling with the wretched Gaillard government,[1] Billières saw fit to decree that Malraux was unworthy of France. Too unworthy, at least, to let Léonide Keigel's short film about the author of *The Psychology of Art* represent France at the Cannes Festival.

One gets lost in conjectures about the precise reason for this veto. Keigel's *Malraux* is first and foremost a brilliant essay which attempts to penetrate the secret of the most fascinating personality in modern French literature. By way of an often naïve but always effective montage, Keigel makes us relive the key events of the last half-century through the eyes and adventurous spirit of André Malraux. Statues come alive and men petrify. Art makes history live again in its own way. Such is the message of this short film, whose most striking images are those showing a passionate Malraux vociferating in the Vél' d'Hiv[2] under the fond gaze of Faulkner.

37: Bergmanorama

There are five or six films in the history of the cinema which one wants to review simply by saying, 'It is the most beautiful of films.' Because there can be no higher praise. Why say more, in effect, about *Tabu*, *Voyage to Italy* or *Le Carrosse d'or*? Like the starfish that opens and closes, they can reveal or conceal the secret of a world of which they are the sole repository and also the fascinating reflection. Truth is their truth. They secrete it deep within themselves, and yet with each shot the screen is rent to scatter it to the winds. To say of them, 'It is the most beautiful of films', is to say everything. Why? Because it just is. Only the cinema can permit this sort of childish reasoning without pretending shame. Why? Because it is the cinema. And because

the cinema is sufficient unto itself. In singing the praises of Welles, Ophuls, Dreyer, Hawks, Cukor, even Vadim, all one need say is, 'It's cinema.' And if we conjure the names of the great artists of past centuries for purposes of comparison, we have no need to say more. On the other hand, one cannot imagine a critic praising the latest Faulkner novel by saying 'It's literature'; or the latest Stravinsky or Paul Klee by saying 'It's music. It's painting.' And even less so of Shakespeare, Mozart or Raphael. It would never occur to a publisher, even Bernard Grasset, to launch a poet with the slogan, 'It's poetry.' Even Jean Vilar, when reviving *Le Cid*, wouldn't dream of announcing it on the posters as 'It's theatre.' Whereas 'It's cinema' is more than a password, it's the war-cry of both film-publicist and film-lover. In short, to assert its own existence as its justification, and by the same token to draw its aesthetic from its ethic, is for the cinema by no means the least of its privileges. Five or six films, I said, + 1, for *Summer Interlude* is the most beautiful of films.

The last great Romantic

The great creators are probably those whose names come to mind when it is impossible to explain in any other way the variety of sensations and emotions which assail you in certain exceptional circumstances, faced by a wonderful landscape or an unexpected event; Beethoven . . . when under the stars, on a clifftop battered by the sea; Balzac, when Paris, seen from Montmartre, seems to belong to you. But henceforth, if the past plays hide-and-seek with the present on the face of the one you love; if death, with the irony of Valéry, answers that you must try to live when, insulted and injured, you finally bring yourself to ask the supreme question; henceforth, then, if the words wonderful summer, end of the holidays, eternal mirage,[1] spring to your lips, you have thereby pronounced the name of the man established once and for all, for those who had seen only a handful of his nineteen films, by a second retrospective at the Cinémathèque Française as the most original film-maker of the European cinema: Ingmar Bergman.

Original? *The Seventh Seal* or *Sawdust and Tinsel*, all right; *Smiles of a Summer Night*, at a pinch; but *Summer With Monika*, *Journey Into Autumn*, *To Joy*, all sub-Maupassant at best. As for technique, just take a look at it: compositions *à la* Germaine Dulac; special effects *à la* Man Ray; reflections in the water *à la* Kirsanoff;[2] and more flashbacks than decency permits. No, cry our patent technicians, it's old-fashioned, it's not cinema, after all the cinema is a craft.

Well, it isn't. The cinema is not a craft. It is an art. It does not mean teamwork. One is always alone; on the set as before the blank page. And for Bergman, to be alone means to ask questions. And to make films means to answer them. Nothing could be more classically romantic.

Of all contemporary directors, admittedly, he alone has not openly rejected those devices beloved of the avant-gardists of the thirties which can still be seen dragging wearily on in every festival of amateur or experimental films. But this is audacity rather than anything else on the part of the director of

Thirst: for Bergman, well aware of what he is doing, uses this bric-à-brac in a different context. In the Bergman aesthetic, those shots of lakes, forests, grass, clouds, the deliberately unusual camera angles, the elaborately careful back-lighting, are no longer mere showing-off or technical trickery: on the contrary, they are integrated into the psychology of the characters at the precise instant when Bergman wants to evoke an equally precise feeling: for instance, Monika's pleasure is conveyed in her journey by boat through an awakening Stockholm, and her weariness by reversing the journey through a Stockholm settling down to sleep.

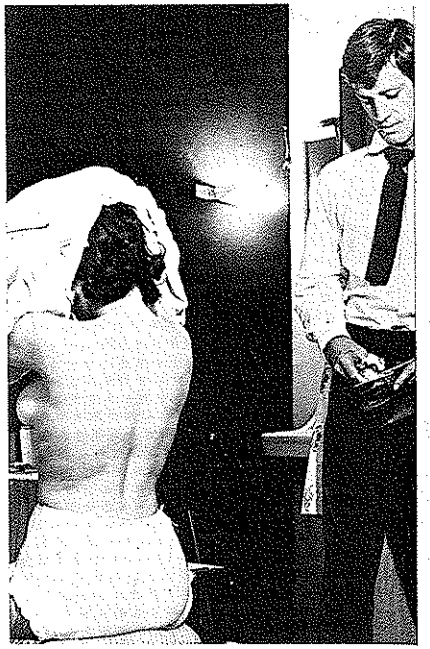
Eternity at the Service of the Instantaneous[3]

At the precise instant. Bergman, in effect, is the film-maker of the instant. Each of his films is born of the hero's reflection on the present moment, and deepens that reflection by a sort of dislocation of time – rather in the manner of Proust but more powerfully, as though Proust were multiplied by both Joyce and Rousseau – to become a vast, limitless meditation upon the *instantaneous*. An Ingmar Bergman film is, if you like, one twenty-fourth of a second metamorphosed and expanded over an hour and a half. It is the world between two blinks of the eyelids, the sadness between two heart-beats, the gaiety between two handclaps.

Hence the prime importance of the flashback in these reveries of solitary Scandinavian wanderers. In *Summer Interlude*, a glance in her mirror is enough to send Maj-Britt Nilsson off like Orpheus and Lancelot in quest of paradise lost and time regained. Employed almost systematically by Bergman in most of his films, the flashback ceases to be what Orson Welles called one of those 'poor tricks' to become, if not the theme of the film, at least its *sine qua non*. In addition, this figure of style, even if employed as such, acquires the enormous advantage that it considerably enriches the scenario since it constitutes its internal rhythm and dramatic framework. One need only have seen any one of Bergman's films to realize that each flashback invariably begins or ends in the right place; in two right places, I should say, because the remarkable thing is that, as with Hitchcock at his best, this sequence change always corresponds to the hero's inner feeling, provoking in other words a renewal of the action – which is an attribute of the truly great. What one mistook for facility was simply a greater rigour. Ingmar Bergman, the intuitive artist decried by the 'craftsmen', here gives a lesson to the best of our scriptwriters. Not for the first time, as we shall see.

Always in advance

When Vadim emerged, we praised him for being up to date when most of his colleagues were one war behind. Similarly, when we saw Giulietta Masina's poetic grimacing, we praised Fellini, whose Baroque freshness had the sweet smell of renewal. But this renaissance of the modern cinema had already been brought to its peak five years earlier by the son of a Swedish pastor. What were we dreaming of when *Summer With Monika* was first shown in Paris? Ingmar Bergman was already doing what we are still accusing French directors of



Summer Interlude and *A Bout de Souffle*

not doing. *Summer With Monika* was already *Et Dieu . . . créa la femme*, but done to perfection. And that last shot of *Nights of Cabiria*, when Giulietta Masina stares fixedly into the camera: have we forgotten that this, too, appeared in the last reel but one of *Summer With Monika*? Have we forgotten that we had already experienced – but with a thousand times more force and poetry – that sudden conspiracy between actor and spectator which so aroused André Bazin's enthusiasm, when Harriet Andersson, laughing eyes clouded with confusion and riveted on the camera, calls on us to witness her disgust in choosing hell instead of heaven?

Wishing won't make just anyone a goldsmith. Nor will trumpeting from the rooftops mean that one is in advance of everyone else. A genuinely original *auteur* is one who never deposits his scripts with the homonymous society.[4] Because that which is precise, Bergman proves, will be new, and that which is profound will be precise. But the profound novelty of *Summer With Monika*, *Thirst* or *The Seventh Seal* is first and foremost their wonderfully precise tone. A spade is a spade for Bergman, certainly, But so it is for many others, and is of little consequence. The important thing is that Bergman, blessed with a foolproof moral elegance, can adapt himself to any truth, even the most scabrous (cf. the last sketch in *Waiting Women*). That which is unpredictable is profound, and a new Bergman film frequently confounds the warmest partisans of the preceding one. One expects a comedy, and along

comes a medieval mystery. Often their only common ground is the incredible scope of their situations, more than a match for Feydeau, just as the dialogue is more than a match for Montherlant in veracity and, supreme paradox, Giraudoux in delicacy. It goes without saying that this sovereign ease in building a script is accompanied, when the camera starts to turn, by an absolute mastery in the direction of actors. In this field Bergman is the peer of a Cukor or a Renoir. Admittedly most of his actors, many of whom also work with him in the theatre, are remarkably talented. I am thinking in particular of Maj-Britt Nilsson, whose stubborn chin and sulky contempt are not without a touch of Ingrid Bergman. But one has to have seen Birger Malmsten as the dreamy boy in *Summer Interlude*, and again, unrecognizably, as the respectable bourgeois in *Thirst*; one has to have seen Gunnar Björnstrand and Harriet Andersson in the first episode of *Journey into Autumn*, and again, with different eyes, different mannerisms, different body rhythms, in *Smiles of a Summer Night*, to realize the extent of Bergman's amazing ability to mould these cattle, as Hitchcock called them.

Bergman versus Visconti

Or scenario versus *mise en scène*. Is it really so simple? One can compare an Alex Joffé with a René Clément, for instance, because there it is simply a question of talent. But when talent comes so close to genius that the result is *Summer Interlude* or *White Nights*, is there any point in endlessly arguing as to which is ultimately greater than the other, the complete *auteur* or the pure *metteur en scène*? Maybe there is, because to do so is to analyse two conceptions of cinema, one of which may be more valid than the other.

Broadly speaking, there are two kinds of film-makers. Those who walk along the streets with their heads down, and those who walk with their heads up. In order to see what is going on around them, the former are obliged to raise their heads suddenly and often, turning to the left and then the right, embracing the field of vision in a series of glances. They *see*. The latter see nothing, they *look*, fixing their attention on the precise point which interests them. When the former are shooting a film, their framing is roomy and fluid (Rossellini), whereas with the latter it is narrowed down to the last millimetre (Hitchcock). With the former (Welles), one finds a script construction which may be loose but is remarkably open to the temptations of chance; with the latter (Lang), camera movements not only of incredible precision in the set but possessing their own abstract value as movements in space. Bergman, on the whole, belongs to the first group, to the cinema of freedom; Visconti to the second, the cinema of rigour.

Personally I prefer *Summer With Monika* to *Senso*, and the *politique des auteurs* to the *politique des metteurs en scène*. Should anyone still doubt that Bergman, more than any other European film-maker, Renoir excepted, is its most typical representative, *Prison* offers, if not proof, at least a very clear symbol. It tells, as you know, of a director who is offered a story about the Devil by his mathematics professor. Yet it is not he, but the writer he has

commissioned to write a script who suffers all the diabolical misfortunes.

As a man of the theatre, Bergman is willing to direct plays by other people. But as a man of the cinema, he intends to remain sole master on board. Unlike Bresson or Visconti, who transfigure a starting-point into something entirely personal, Bergman creates his adventures and characters out of nothing.[5] No one would deny that *The Seventh Seal* is less skilfully directed than *White Nights*, its compositions less precise, its angles less rigorous; but – and herein lies the essential difference – for a man so enormously talented as Visconti, making a *very good film* is ultimately a matter of *very good taste*. He is sure of making no mistakes, and to a certain extent it is *easy*. It is easy to choose the prettiest curtains, the most perfect furniture, to make the only possible camera movements, if one knows one is gifted that way. For an artist, to know oneself too well is to yield a little to facility.

What is difficult, on the other hand, is to advance into unknown lands, to be aware of the danger, to take risks, to be afraid. There is a sublime moment in *White Nights* when the snow falls in huge flakes around Maria Schell and Marcello Mastroianni in their boat. But this sublimity is nothing compared to the old musician in *To Joy* who lies on the grass, watching Stig Olin looking amorously at Maj-Britt Nilsson in her chaise-longue, and thinking, 'How can one describe a scene of such great beauty!' I admire *White Nights*, but I love *Summer Interlude*.

38: *L'Eau Vive*

It is to the credit of Shell that they financed *Louisiana Story*. It is equally to the credit of the French electricity company that they helped financially in the making of *L'Eau vive*. One is entitled, of course, to imagine how the director of *Que Viva Mexico!*, or of *Mr Arkadin* (especially now that we know how he planned to film the Dominici affair for British TV)[1] might have transformed Jean Giono's marvellous and very Rossellinian scenario.

For two hours, Giono and François Villiers weave in CinemaScope the threads of a Provençal saga in which, in the prologue, the voice of the author of *Angelo* identifies his latest heroine Hortense with La Durance, and the adventures of this flighty shepherdess with those of the river whose diversion will so deeply alter the physiognomy of this region of the Lower Alps. In a way it is as if, in front of this camera suddenly turned mirror, one had the labours of Hercules, and behind the mirror, the dirty, hard and deceptively mysterious little face of Pascale Audret.

But why should anyone feel it necessary to claim that it required the genius of a Flaherty, Eisenstein or Welles to film a plot which is both naïve and sensational, and might almost have sprung straight from the dreams of the late Gaston Bachelard. Even the name of Renoir was mentioned by some critics. Mistakenly, I think. For the director of *Toni* has no bearing on the author of *Hussard sur le toit*, and vice versa. With him, *L'Eau vive* would have become something else again; wonderful, it goes without saying, but something else. Whereas as it stands, the script of *L'Eau vive* is

so detailed that what it needed to film it appropriately was self-effacement pure and simple, rather than any transformation.

Which François Villiers has understood perfectly. And in my opinion he deserves praise for merely having wanted to make this film – the most astonishingly *new* film of the whole French cinema since the Liberation.

What do the flourishes matter, since they are already part of the canvas? What does the colour matter when it exists already in the design? The important thing in *L'Eau vive* is not to be able to say 'I shot bulldozers gutting a village from the best possible angle', but rather 'I shot bulldozers gutting a village' – to be able to give to romance the lure of reality, as is right and proper in any shotgun marriage between fiction and reality.

When Hortense returns home after having been almost drowned and cries as she opens the door, 'Ah, you were languishing!',[2] the scene is good not because it is particularly well set, shot or acted, but because her remark is both very literary and completely accurate. You might chance to hear it spoken by some girl walking in the streets of Arles or Avignon, and you would immediately think, 'What a wonderful line for a film.' And each sequence of *L'Eau vive* is equally in keeping. Pagnol?[3] I don't want to hear his name. *La Femme du boulanger* is to *L'Eau vive* as Jean de Létraz[4] is to Molière.

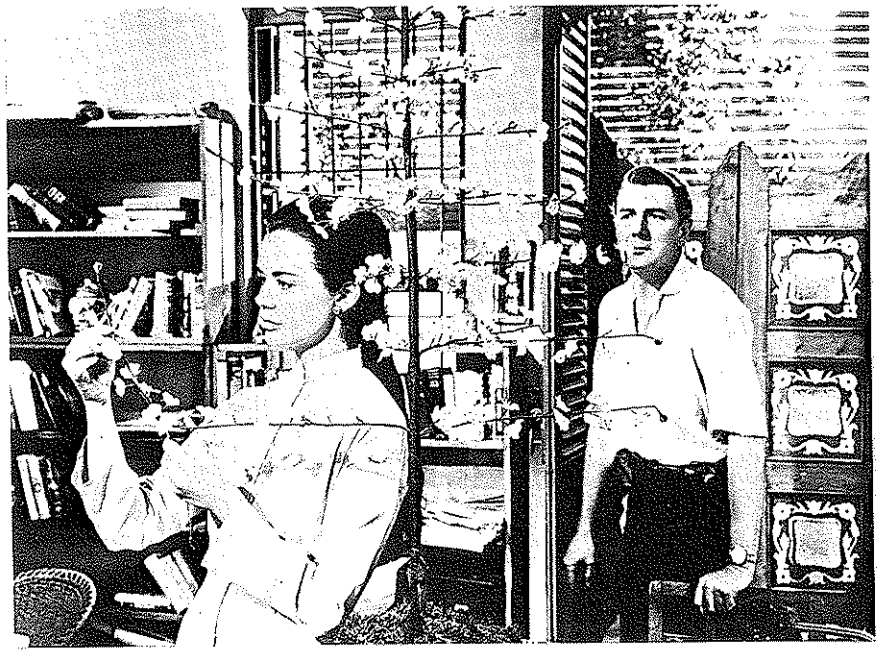
Here fiction rejoins the reality which had overtaken it. Hortense's dialogue, for instance, is no falser than the lines given to Anne-Marie by Giraudoux in *Les Anges du péché*.[5] The art of the film-maker is, precisely, to be able to seize this artificial beauty, giving the impression that it is entirely natural. François Villiers shows himself much less awkward at this than his first feature, *Hans le Marin*, might have led one to fear. His clumsiness and lack of invention don't matter a damn, since we are almost grateful for his textbook approach and tentative direction of the actors, which at least do nothing to spoil the flavour of what they set out to achieve.

Let us not be cavalier about our pleasure; nor imagine, when Pascale Audret runs away along the banks to escape a gendarme, how the cameraman of *The Cranes Are Flying*[6] might have shot it. What would we gain except less sincerity? Pascale Audret runs without grace, but without being insipid either. She intrigues rather than delights us. But is this not the theme of the film? The butcher's lard model and Hortense's toys are ugly. Maybe, but they exist and we believe in them. That is the main thing. All this, in short, this Durance by turns clear and muddy, this girl in a red and yellow sweater on a scooter, bears a very pretty name, which is poetry.

39: *The Quiet American*

A young American (Audie Murphy) entices a ravishing Vietnamese girl who has been the most accomplished of mistresses (Giorgia Moll) away from an English reporter some years his senior (Michael Redgrave). First scenario.

In an Indochina heading blithely towards Dien-Bien-Phu, Eisenhower idealism runs up against the pragmatic cynicism of Old England under the disabused eye of the late Fourth Republic. Second scenario.

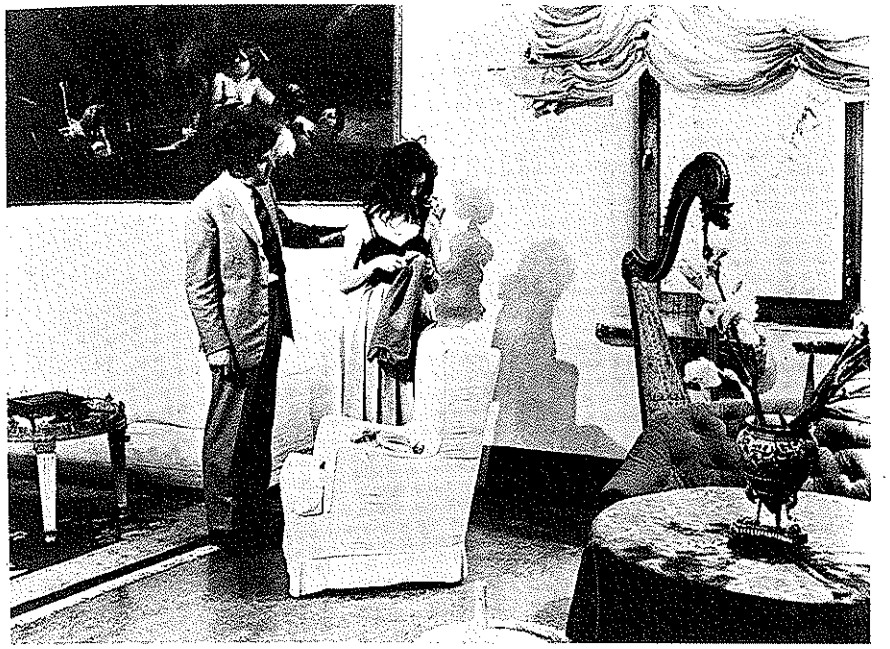


Giorgia Moll with Michael Redgrave in *The Quiet American*, and . . .

After participating in the murder of a sort of Texan Candide 1958, an unbeliever discovers his faith. Third scenario, this one signed by Graham Greene. The first two being the two elements, the two cinematographic disguises with which Joseph L. Mankiewicz deliberately and advisedly tricked out this novel by the author of *The Power and the Glory* for the benefit of the average spectator. The which average spectator, all things considered, stands a good chance of seeing in it only an ultra-talkative, rather pretentious, slightly flabby although studded with good intentions, in other words very literary, film.

But, after all, does Joseph L. Mankiewicz make films for the average spectator? Earlier films like *A Letter to Three Wives* and *People Will Talk*, and more recently *All About Eve*, and *The Barefoot Contessa* in particular, would seem proof to the contrary. In any case these films finally established their director as the most intelligent man in all contemporary cinema. This reputation is merely confirmed by *The Quiet American.* In turn scriptwriter, producer, director, and then all of them together, Mankiewicz is an all-round athlete who has more than one trick up his sleeve.

Nevertheless, while it confirms Mankiewicz's mental agility, *The Quiet American* also proves that in the end too much intelligence limits the scope of a film, or more precisely, its effectiveness. Detractors happily maintain that the cinema is inferior to the novel, not to mention literature: they



. . . with Michel Piccoli in *Le Mépris*

complain that it has no Stendhal, no Proust, no Giraudoux, and maintain that the day it finds one, all will be well. But it so happens that in Joseph L. Mankiewicz we have the Giraudoux of the camera, and all is not as well as it should be. Writing *Pour Lucrèce* is one thing; filming it is another.

Each scene of *The Quiet American*, in fact, invites comparison with Jean Giraudoux in various ways. Instead of 'The Pope was dying', we find 'Indochina was dying.' Like *Combat avec l'ange*, *The Quiet American* begins under the sign of politico-poetic reverie. Also, how can one avoid feeling that Giorgia Moll, although Italian, is the southern Asiatic cousin of *Bella* or *Eglantine*, and Michael Redgrave and Audie Murphy the brothers of Simon and Siegfried?[1]

Each character, each line of dialogue is of a poetic subtlety rare on the screen. Each sequence is of such dramatic ingenuity (cf. the marriage proposal) that one wonders how the distributor, if he is honest, will go about dubbing a film whose main feature is a constant play on words and the difference between languages.

Such delicacy in the scenario, so many gems in the dialogue, are staggering. But is this not a reproach rather than praise?

Too good a writer for the cinema

It all looks, in fact, as though everything had been planned on paper, the

actual shooting adding very little. 'Nowadays', Gene Kelly declared bitterly (*Cahiers du Cinéma* 85), 'the cinema is becoming a means of expression for the writer instead of the director.' This is the complaint one might make about Mankiewicz: that he is too perfect a writer to be a perfect director as well. Basically, what is missing from *The Quiet American* is cinema. It has everything – brilliant actors, sparkling dialogue – but no cinema. The idea behind each sequence is admirable (cf. the outrage on the Continental Hotel, the New Year carnival, the Vietcong attack on the watch-tower); each shot teems with invention (cf. Giorgia Moll's milk-shake, the sequence at the Rendezvous); and the result on the screen remains slightly academic, both in the shooting and editing. What a pity. What a fantastic film Aldrich – not to mention Welles – would have made of this fine script which improves a hundred per cent on Graham Greene's novel. But Mankiewicz probably got so much enjoyment from the writing that there was little enough left for filming it. Though a matter for regret, *The Quiet American* is still the most interesting film about at the moment.

40: *Summer with Monika*

The reissue of *Summer With Monika* on commercial release is the cinematographic event of the year. It is a homage to Ingmar Bergman by the Parisian cinemas. So one must hurry to the Panthéon just as one hurried to the Orangerie[1] for Van Gogh a few years ago. The superb retrospective at the Cinémathèque Française and the fantastic success of *Summer Interlude* and *The Seventh Seal* probably had a good deal to do with this sudden Parisian craze for Bergman. But so it should be. Ignored when it was first shown on the boulevards, *Summer With Monika* is the most original film of the most original of directors. It is to the cinema today what *Birth of a Nation* is to the classical cinema. Just as Griffith influenced Eisenstein, Gance and Lang, so *Summer With Monika*, five years before its time, brought to a peak that renaissance in modern cinema whose high priests were Fellini in Italy, Aldrich in Hollywood, and (so we believed, wrongly perhaps) Vadim in France.

Summer With Monika, in fact, already is *Et Dieu . . . créa la femme*, but brought off brilliantly, without a single flaw, without a single hesitation, with total lucidity in both dramatic and moral construction and in its development, in other words its *mise en scène*.

Summer With Monika comes two years after *Summer Interlude*. But curiously, the adventures of Maj-Britt Nilsson might be a continuation of those of Harriet Andersson, which precede[2] them in the Bergman chronology. *Summer Interlude* was the autumn, reveries on a solitary excursion, romantic as the Rousseau of the wonderful *Confessions*. *Summer With Monika* is the summer, holidays on the cheap, sordid pessimism reminiscent of *La Nausée*. As I say, two years separate the films. But for Bergman, two years means two films, or twice the experience and ability. Admittedly, of all modern directors he alone has not openly rejected those devices beloved of the

avant-gardists of the thirties: superimpositions *à la* Delluc, reflections in the water *à la* Kirsanoff, back-lighting *à la* Epstein, that whole bric-à-brac of effects which one now finds only in the films of Gréville and Robert Hossein, or in amateur film festivals. But the use today of such outmoded tricks is audacity on Bergman's part. As used by the director of *Summer With Monika*, those mannered compositions, those bizarre angles, those shots of clouds, lakes, undergrowth, are not gratuitous camera tricks or technical virtuosity. On the contrary, Bergman always manages to integrate them into the psychology of his characters at the precise instant when he must evoke a precise feeling. Thus, for instance, a track out at dawn to express Monika's pleasure in her journey by boat through an awakening Stockholm; and later, the same tracking shot on the river and its embankments, but forwards this time as Monika returns, weary and disillusioned, to a sleeping Stockholm.

Bergman is the film-maker of the instant. His camera seeks only one thing: to seize the present moment at its most fugitive, and to delve deep into it so as to give it the quality of eternity. Hence the prime importance of the flashback, since the dramatic mainspring of each Bergman film is simply the hero's reflection on the moment and his situation at that moment.

In *Summer Interlude*, the beautiful, tender summer became tragic. But in *Summer With Monika*, the pleasure is shot through with squalor from the start, the happiness with spleen. Monika and her lover, those modern Robinsons with only a sleeping-bag to harbour their love, soon turn their backs on joy to wallow in disgust. One must see *Summer With Monika*, if only for the extraordinary moment when Harriet Andersson, before making love with the man she has already thrown out once before, stares fixedly into the camera, her laughing eyes clouded with confusion, and calls on us to witness her disgust at involuntarily choosing hell instead of heaven. It is the saddest shot in the history of the cinema.

'Love at leisure, love unto death. . . .'[3] *Summer With Monika* is the first Baudelairean film. Only Bergman can film men as they are loved but hated by women, and women as they are hated but loved by men.

And as for sensuality, Bergman would make the 'Série Blonde' look like pure spirituality if he were concerned only to evoke (thanks to the magic of the moving picture, as Louis Marcorelles[4] would say) the quiver of a shoulder, the beating of a heart, the trembling of a knee. But there is something else. For Monika, like Michael O'Hara in *Lady from Shanghai*, it is a question of growing old gracefully. As old age, alas, means ugliness, it is lucky, Bergman murmurs, that the camera exists to preserve beauty.

41: *Woman in a Dressing-gown*

One really has to rack one's brains to find anything to say about a British film. One wonders why. But that's the way it is. And there isn't even an exception to prove the rule. Especially not *Woman in a Dressing-gown* anyhow, in spite of its acting prize[1] at the recent Berlin Festival. That just goes to show that the Germans have no idea either.

Scriptwise, J. Lee Thompson's film relates the adventures of a London shrew whose goodwill soon has her husband seeking a divorce. How will our cut-price Deborah Kerr succeed in keeping her man in the fold by going on doing the wrong thing? God knows, it's a starting-point as good as most. But it should at least have been handled with humour. Alas! alas! alas! Cukor is not English.

Direction-wise, in fact, things are equally insipid. So lunatic is the direction that the insipidity – Mr Thompson's only original touch – is at least rather different from the sort which has characterized Her Gracious Majesty's films since the departure of the film-maker who knew too much, the man of *The Thirty-Nine Steps*. Actually, the way in which J. Lee Thompson seasons his revolting stew should be called pretentious rather than lunatic. It is putting it mildly to say that his style is as maddening as his heroine's behaviour. From beginning to end the film is an incredible debauch of camera movements as complex as they are silly and meaningless, and of cuts and changes in rhythm on cupboards closing and doors opening such as even Bardem[2] would be ashamed of nowadays. But tact never bothers J. Lee Thompson. Impossible as it may seem, in *Woman in a Dressing-gown* he yields even further than Juan Antonio to the temptations of the sort of virtuosity one finds in France nowadays only among ex-pupils of I.D.H.E.C. making their début on television. In other words, multiply the ugliness of *Death of a Cyclist* by the unfunniness of *Passport to Pimlico*, raise to the power of the worst of bad taste from Carol Reed or David Lean, and you will get *Woman in a Dressing-gown*.

May the English lose the Middle East soon if the loss of their political power could restore their sense of beauty, if not of efficiency. Like football, the British cinema today is an enigma as much as a legend. How have the descendants of Daniel Defoe, Thomas Hardy and George Meredith reached such a degree of incompetence in matters of art? Why, for instance, do English actors who are the best in the world (cf. Charles Laughton, Cary Grant) become absolutely commonplace as soon as they start work at Elstree or Pinewood? A mystery as aggravating as Agatha Christie's novels. Even the Cannes jury in its bad days would not have let itself be bowled over by Yvonne Mitchell's 'Look at Me!' performance as a virago half-way between an ostrich and Donald Duck, compared to whom Katharine Hepburn is a model of freshness and youth in *Summer Madness*, and Joanne Woodward a model of sensitivity and discretion in *The Three Faces of Eve*. No, it really is enough to make one despair. Except that to despair of the British cinema would be to admit that it exists.

42: *The Pajama Game*

Stanley Donen is surely the master (major or minor) of the musical? *The Pajama Game* exists to prove it. 'She' is the trade union delegate in a pyjama factory of which 'he' is a management executive. 'It' is the first left-wing operetta, quite skilfully filmed, for Donen sticks to the Broadway conventions but pushes them to their utmost limits, which results in a rather eccentric and totally unrestrained work.

It all looks as though Stanley Donen, ill-at-ease with romantic plots (cf. *Kiss Them for Me*), only needs the presence of a talented choreographer (in this case Robert Fosse who, you will remember, was responsible for the charming entrechats of *My Sister Eileen*) to restore his wings. In the event, this means throwing inhibition aside for the pleasure pure and simple of filming a free-for-all of pirouettes and leaps.

From this point of view *The Pajama Game* is enormously successful. More so than *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* because it goes further in wild comedy (e.g. the Guignolesque Carol Haney). More so than *Funny Face*, too, because its weaker moments are less insipid (except for the monologues of John Raitt, the male star who came with the contract for the film rights of the play), and doubtless also because all the Sabrinas in the world are not worth one Doris Day.

The picnic sequence, for instance, with its marvellous, frenzied tempo, surpasses anything of the kind that has been done, notably, good as it is, in *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*. But this time Donen has not hesitated to go to the point of going too far – brilliantly abetted, I should repeat, by Robert Fosse on the one hand, and on the other by Harry Stradling, who has managed to coax a maximum of bright and graceful effects from the austere Warnercolor, juggling with red lipstick, blue jeans, green grass, yellow flags, white skirts, to compose a wild and ravishing kaleidoscope.

Bah! you may say, that's nothing, or not very much; and anyway there isn't even any difference any more between the real dancers and the rest. But is this really a fault? I'm not so sure. It is a curious fact that classical dance always fails to get across the screen footlights – if I may so phrase it – whereas modern ballet is as happy there as a fish in water because it is a stylization of real, everyday movements. Classical dance, which seeks the immobility in movement, is by definition the opposite of cinema. The aim of each step, each arm movement, each spring, each leap, is to achieve a sculptural pose: which is far removed, obviously, from the concerns of the Lumière Brothers. Rather than a goal, repose in the cinema is on the contrary the starting-point for movement. And this is even more true in the musical, which is in a way the idealization of cinema. A balustrade is no longer something to lean on but an obstacle to clear, a chair no longer something to sit on but a site for a delicate balancing act: everything becomes simply a pretext for the 'lines which displace movement'.

So hooray for Robert Fosse and Stanley Donen, who have managed to push this aesthetic almost to its furthest limits in *The Pajama Game*. The arabesques of their dance movements reveal an unfamiliar grace, that of actuality, which is completely absent from, for example, the purely mathematical choreography of Michael Kidd. And the originality of this style, if style it is (and it surely is, because one can recognize Fred Astaire and Audrey Hepburn striding down the boulevards in *Funny Face* in the way these

'Choreography by Bob Fosse': *Bande à part* and . . .

young people stride and swing their arms under the multi-coloured flags in *The Pajama Game*), might perhaps be defined by saying that when the actor dances, he is no longer transformed into a dancer doing his act, nor is he a dancer playing a role (e.g. Gene Kelly); he still remains in character, but suddenly feels the need to dance. Herein lies the novelty. For the rest, two Doris Day songs ('I Am Not in Love' and 'There Was a Man') fill the bill admirably.

43: *The Long Hot Summer*

This amalgam of several stories by Faulkner as yet untranslated into French (among them *The Hamlet*, from which comes the character of Varner, played by Orson Welles, and *Barn's Burning*, which includes the pyromaniac played by Paul Newman) has the merit that it sheds definitive light on the merits of Martin Ritt, a would-be film-maker who, though endowed with an Aldrichian corpulence, is far from being the equal even of a Kubrick, let alone a Lumet or a Mulligan, as his second film, *No Down Payment*, led some to believe. Thanks for this were due chiefly to a solid script by Philip Yordan (confronting us with a small Californian town like Sartre's *Huis-Clos*), and to the fact that Ritt's first film, *Edge of the City*, had not yet been seen. Already it reveals his chief weakness: a total inability to make use of excellent actors (John Cassavetes in *Edge of the City*, Tony Randall in *No Down Payment*).

. . . *The Pajama Game*

This is proved once again in *The Long Hot Summer*, particularly in so far as Paul Newman, Anthony Franciosa and Lee Remick are concerned (look at the last two in *A Face in the Crowd*) – not to mention Orson Welles, who hams it up at will to the greater ridicule of our friend Martin.[1] If any interest remains, it is due to what remains of Faulkner in their behaviour. To be nice, let's just say simply that Ritt is perhaps not a common hack but an honest gaffer (even then, there are better). But doubtless Jerry Wald asks no more in squeezing maximum productivity out of the factory that Fox has been for some years now.

44: Telegram from Berlin

[On the occasion of the 1958 Berlin Festival, Jean-Luc Godard sent the following detailed account to *Cahiers du Cinéma*.]

Golden Bear[1] Wild Strawberries proves Ingmar greatest stop script fantastic about flash conscience Victor Sjöström dazzled beauty Bibi Andersson stop multiply Heidegger by Giraudoux get Bergman stop French selection pitiful stop Passe Diable[2] beautiful photography but Salle Pleyel story talent Jacques Dupont not in question stop Lilli Palmer very good bad Radvany remake[3] adorable Léontine Sagan film stop Swiss films[4] worthless stop Lee Thompson International Critics prize[5] for plagiarism Bitter Victory stop

Norwegian film[6] old-fashioned Epstein aesthetics stop La Magnani and Quinn admirable in Wild is the Wind stop Study life Italian immigrants USA stop Cukor many hits misses bull Bhowani Junction stop Lollobrigida in Anna di Brooklyn shows La Loi[7] will be fiasco stop Defiant Ones sanctions definitive contempt Stanley Kramer stop Time to Love Time to Die one war behind Douglas Sirk less hellish Brooks[8] stop Sandhya charming in story Indian jailer[9] big heart stop Japan prison film[10] also usual lame story stop but thanks Tadashi Imai much colour and poetry stop Koundouros folly[11] nice views stop Beware Cairo advance on usual belly dances Nasserian films stop left Indonesian and Mexican films after ten minutes stop ditto Iran Argentine Finland but after five minutes stop Spanish film not seen reason rendezvous Gretchen swimming-pool. (H.L.)

45: Jean-Luc Godard interviews Astruc

Since his first film, *Le Rideau Cramoisi*, adapted from a short story by Barbey d'Aurevilly, Alexandre Astruc – who won the Louis Delluc Prize[1] in 1952 – has been concerned with the problem of adapting a literary world to the screen. His purpose: to find a visual equivalent for interior atmosphere. His second film, *Les Mauvaises Rencontres*, which won the prize for the best direction at the Venice Festival in 1955, was a fictionalized account of youth in the immediate post-war generation. In *Une Vie*, which he adapted with Roland Laudenbach from Maupassant's celebrated novel, Astruc attempted to modernize a perennial subject in both style and theme.

Alexandre Astruc: But modernize does not mean transposition to the present day. Any adaptation of a celebrated work has necessarily a *point of view*. I wanted to tell a costume story in a *modern* way. This point of view once chosen, I had to follow it through to the end. Above all it was a matter of sensitivity and narrative style. Being faithful doesn't mean a thing. One must be true. Towards the work selected, and consequently to oneself.

Jean-Luc Godard: But why *Une Vie*?

Astruc: I was offered the subject and accepted.

Godard: You had other projects, in particular *La Plaie et le couteau*, written with Françoise Sagan.

Astruc: Yes, but I had abandoned that temporarily. It was then that Annie Dorfmann suggested I make *Une Vie*, and I accepted gladly. Why? Because in Maupassant I encountered some of my current preoccupations. Maupassant is a realistic writer, but he is also a poet. What pleased me in reading *Une Vie* was not the realism, but the madness behind the realism. There is a familiar Maupassant, I think, and an unfamiliar Maupassant. The first is like Alphonse Daudet, and the second like Edgar Poe. Don't forget that Maupassant was mad when he died. What pleased me was to discover *Le Horla*[2] adumbrated in *Une Vie*. I suddenly realized that what Maupassant was

describing was perhaps less the characters than the *momentum* urging them on. And this fascinated me.

Godard: The lyricism of a reputedly earthy writer?

Astruc: Exactly. Maupassant is one of the most widely read authors in Anglo-Saxon countries as well as in Russia, and his influence on people like Hemingway and Steinbeck, or Turgenev, is indisputable. In re-reading him, I tried to discover what it was in him that had given birth to this bitter, violent, anguished and yet poetic literature in these new countries.

That is what I was thinking about as I re-read *Une Vie*. Like Faulkner in *The Wild Palms*, Maupassant was not so much describing the character of a woman, as the passage of life through a woman. So the subject is not at all a subtle one. From the outset my characters, whatever their psychology, are driven by something stronger than psychology. I did not want to make a film-novel, meaning novel as applied to *La Princesse de Clèves* or *L'Education sentimentale*.[3] It is, if you like, the opposite of an analytical film, although the matter is that of a psychological film.

Godard: You preach modernism, and yet you make a costume film?

Astruc: Costume or not is irrelevant, in the cinema at least. Anyway the costume film has one advantage: it allows you to go straight into what you want to say and show. In other words, you don't need to make a show of being realistic as you do in modern films. Moreover, I never stressed the period setting. We tried to convey the fantastic atmosphere of the book rather than its bourgeois drama, to express an over-all feeling in its momentum, its lyricism; not only in my direction, but in Bertrand's décor, Mayo's costumes and Claude Renoir's photography.

Godard: In fact you edged *Une Vie* towards *Jude the Obscure* and the great English novels?

Astruc: If you like, inasmuch as the English novel is less intellectual than the French. In *Une Vie*, Maupassant – a writer who is at once tender and cruel, bitter and full of compassion – was not describing the evolution of a woman as the seasons pass, but the reflections of the seasons on this woman's soul. It is these reflections I show in my film; and opposite this woman, the man through whom she is trying to make her life and who, although married to her, denies her legitimate aspiration because he is too egotistical. So *Une Vie* is the story of a couple, but above all the story of the solitude in which a woman is compelled to confine herself by the negative drive of a man who is her only link with the world. What I wanted to tell, in fact, was the story of a misunderstanding. I tried to describe a woman as one normally portrays men, and vice versa. My heroine needs cerebral constructions. This is why I am delighted to have been able to work with Maria Schell, whose acting, her way of building a character, is based on a masculine principle. Christian Marquand, on the contrary, has a much more feminine style. So, by the very nature of the actors, the contrast and misunderstanding automatically existed between this

man who has finished his life and thinks only of hunting and girls, and this woman who is just beginning hers.

Godard: This is your first film in colour?

Astruc: Yes, and it excited me enormously. Claude Renoir and I have tried to use colour as a dramatic element rather than purely for its decorative value. Two things have always irritated me in colour films. Firstly, the deception, pretending that the colour doesn't really exist and working in half-tints and blue-greys! In *Une Vie*, Jeanne and Julien's *salon* is violet. His room is green, hers is yellow. The other thing that has also seemed bad to me in most colour films is the transition from an exterior to an interior.

When you shoot in colour, you must stick to this one principle: what looks beautiful to the naked eye remains beautiful in the viewfinder, and will be beautiful on the screen.

I do not believe that some subjects are suited to colour and others to black and white, because colour can just as well be used dramatically.

What *is* difficult is the transitions. In autumn, because of the sun and the leaves, the façade of a house becomes yellow. Then one goes indoors with a character into a violet *salon*. It's very tricky. It is the same when you are cutting from a long shot to a close-up and don't want a shock effect. A film in colour must be ten times more carefully planned than one in black and white. There is no secret to colour. There is only the secret of beauty.

Godard: What about the wide screen?

Astruc: I am for it. Completely. It gives things not so much a different aspect as a different *feeling*. The feeling one has about objects and faces is no longer the same as it was with the standard format.

Godard: Your projects?

Astruc: Maybe *La Plaie et le couteau*, or possibly *Germinal*. Zola was mad too. Or a film in an unusual milieu. Yes, that's it. I'd like to film something lyrical and violent in a very simple setting. Passionate themes are usually set in aristocratic milieux, and stories where money is the mainspring of the drama among the poor. I'd like to do the opposite: put a story into a framework where it doesn't seem to belong. One can no longer separate love from the rest of existence, but I'd like to show that in spite of everything passion is still one of the motive forces in modern living.

Les Liaisons dangereuses is impossible today, if you like, because it assumes leisure, boredom, gratuitousness, compensation. Love today is mingled with all sorts of contradictory things – and that is more or less what I'd like to show.

46: Jean-Luc Godard interviews François Reichenbach

Four years ago, filmgoers were introduced to the name of François Reichenbach by *Impressions de New York*. This one-time collector of paintings took, technically speaking, crazy risks. He took his camera to places where most lighting cameramen would have refused to set foot; he also shoots without a

tripod, and for preference at times when an exposure meter is no longer much use. A series of shorts – audacious because poetic, poetic because audacious – resulted from these good intentions: *Houston Texas*, *L'Américain se détend*, *Au pays de Porgy and Bess*, *L'Eté indien*, *Carnaval à la Nouvelle-Orléans*. With them, Reichenbach began to carry off prize after prize in the 'qualité'[1] race each year. Now, assisted by Marcel Grignon, he has started his first feature, *L'Amérique vue par un Français*.

François Reichenbach: This may only be a working title. It is both a good and a bad indication of my purpose. Good, inasmuch as I don't want to try to make *Lost Continent*[2] but an *Amica America*[3] like Giraudoux. Bad, inasmuch as I am going to do my damnedest not to film things from my viewpoint as a Frenchman. I shall show America both as people think they know it and as they do not know it. But between these two points is a no man's land which is the true face of America. And to discover it, I need American ideas, not French ones. I need Steinberg for the credits, Henry Miller or William Saroyan for the script – not French writers. With our portable Cameflexes, Grignon and I will simply be a mirror in which America will watch itself from morning till night, appalled by its own ugliness, delighted by its beauty.

Jean-Luc Godard: You are restoring documentary to its proper dignity?

Reichenbach: If you like. With *L'Amérique vue par un Français*, I'd like to bring off on a large scale what I have only half-succeeded in doing in a small way. As I'm not a writer, I use a camera. But I want to use it both as a painter's sketch-book, like Delacroix in Africa, and as though I were a reporter for a big newspaper. I want to overtake fiction, not so much because reality goes further than fiction but because it implies it. In this, I am a documentarist. All great films, I believe, have an essential tendency towards documentary. Eisenstein's greatest film is *Que Viva Mexico!*, and Murnau's, *Tabu*. Welles shot a vast documentary in Brazil,[4] and Rossellini in India.[5] All this is by way of saying that in my opinion actuality is at the root of all *mise en scène*. You remember what Lubitsch said? 'First film houses and mountains, then you will be ready to film a comedy.'

Godard: Have you a script prepared?

Reichenbach: Yes and no. I have an itinerary prepared. We shall follow the good weather. It will not be a sketch film, nor a series of shorts about different events. And it is much more difficult like this. You may perhaps get some idea of my theme if I mention Dos Passos. Broadly speaking, that's it. I want people to hear the heart of America beating throughout the film, and this heart-beat will have to be created in the editing, on the moritone. It will be very difficult. Basically it will be as though the camera lens were an American eye – the eye of an invisible American, you understand – and the suspense will be the life of this invisible American. At the beginning of the film, his birth, and at the end, his death. During the rest of the film one will see him living, loving, striving, suffering, through the images presented.

Godard: Are you taking much equipment?

Reichenbach: Two cameras equipped for Dyaliscope. We shall be shooting in Eastman Colour. Marcel Grignon will have an assistant, so will I. And two station-wagons.

Godard: Is that all?

Reichenbach: I was forgetting the little portable Nagra[6] for recording sound direct. This is very important, especially in America. Actually, I believe one could make a film about America without pictures. Just the soundtrack would be enough. Of course there is noise in Paris. But compared to New York, Los Angeles or Chicago, it's like birds twittering. Once I was in 78th Street. Suddenly sirens began screaming so loudly in the district that I thought war had broken out again: it was a cleaner being taken to hospital. And everything is like that, even the meanest aspect of everyday life. It is both terrifying and fantastic. I don't think it exists anywhere else to such a degree. It is this fantastic aspect – used in the German Romantic sense – that I want to capture.

In a fortnight I shall make a start by filming the huge Baby Parade which takes place every year in New Jersey. At least two thousand twins get together in this picnic décor, a little like Joshua Logan's film. It's a hallucinating sight. Next, I shall go to see the race organized by Ford for kids with miniature cars. I shall also go to the under-eight-year-old boxing-matches. I shall go everywhere – on millionaire beaches, among the last Indians, to tatty strip-tease shows.

Godard: So it will be a sort of dissertation on America?

Reichenbach: Perhaps. I also want to film the rodeos for prisoners in the death cell. I want to reveal the unusual in the banal and vice versa. A woman in a kitchen is nothing special. But a woman who cooks a meal, eats it and washes up in five minutes is amusing, its poetic. And in America, that's what poetry is. They say exactly the opposite to us: I am, therefore I think. Everything is action. Living is all in top gear. You may say it's the poetry of snack-bars and plastics, but it's poetry just the same.

The interesting thing in documentary, you know, is not picturesqueness or strangeness. Not primarily, anyway. The thing of prime interest is actuality, reality. The amusing thing about travel is discovering things you know in a different form, in a different décor. I loathe exoticism. It's pernicious. When I go to San Francisco, what I like doing is having a beer and playing the pin-ball machines as if I were on the Champs-Elysées; looking at people's faces as I look at them in France; feeling that I'm a man and not a tourist. Why is it that when film-makers go abroad to make films the results are almost always bad? Because the film-makers no longer behave like normal people. I had a friend like this. His father paid for him to travel a lot and was scandalized when, in Madrid for instance, instead of making hot-foot for the Prado, my friend bought a newspaper and went to sit on a café terrace. I approve of that – and it's the sort of outlook one needs to make a film about America.

It is inasmuch as people are prosaic that they are poetic. But I see I am

starting to theorize. And that's the last thing I want in my film – to seem to be theorizing. It will be no good at all if one feels that it's premeditated or starts off with a particular idea about America. It must be quite straightforward. No ideas, just a chronicle of events.[7] That's all.

Godard: *L'Amérique vue par un Français* will be the first poetic chronicle of America?

Reichenbach: I'd like it to be. But it's difficult. You know, character interests me less than attitude. Not long ago I saw a film about Kamchatka, or Siberia, I forget which. Well, it could just as well have been shot on the plot of waste ground behind the Porte de Clignancourt. It had a brilliant commentary. But cinema was completely missing. It was simply a lecture, clever and witty, but not a film. One had the feeling that cinema was pointless. And if cinema is pointless, why make films? In documentary one must be wary of bias, I agree. But while remaining objective in both scenario and commentary, one can and must still take sides visually. This is what excites me. In so far as I believe in attitudes, I believe in visuals, in the intrinsic worth of the image. A newsreel shot, if beautiful, is twice as beautiful as one from an ordinary film. Planning something beautiful and then saying 'Roll 'em!' is easier than saying 'Roll 'em!' just when beauty springs up unexpectedly. Imagine a butterfly fluttering in a field. If you want to be sure of capturing it, you can always cover the field with a vast wire-netting. It may take years, but you will succeed in the end. What interests me is to go after the butterfly without even a net, just with my hands. Therein lies the difference between real and false documentary. Documentary and newsreel are the noblest of the genres. They do not seek the instantaneous for its own sake, but for what it secretes of eternity. One always comes back to the cinema, you see.

47: *Une Vie*

I don't give a damn about the merry-go-round decorated by Walt Disney, the lunch on the grass with imitation plastic cloths, the chewing-gum green of a ball of wool. I don't give a damn about any of the lapses in taste piled up by Astruc, Claude Renoir and Mayo. Or about Roman Vlad's saxophone either.[1] Actually it isn't bad. But anyhow, the real beauty of *Une Vie* lies elsewhere.

In Pascale Petit's yellow dress shimmering amid the Velazquez grey dunes of Normandy. That's wrong! Not Velazquez grey.[2] Not even Delacroix grey, howl the 'connoisseurs'.

To no purpose. Already Christian Marquand is leaning over the break-water, holding out his hand to Maria Schell. The 'connoisseurs' are thrown by a film which moves so quickly that it almost marks time. It is well known that the fastest racing-cars are those that brake best: *Une Vie* is like them. One thought one knew Astruc, and constructed theories without noticing that the sequence was over and had already taken off in another aesthetic or moral direction. One talked of Velazquez without noticing that Pascale Petit's dress was Baudelaire yellow, and Maria Schell's eyes Ramuz blue.[3]

Why Ramuz? Because behind Maupassant's puppets, behind Jeanne and Julien, it is the face of *Aline* or *Jean-Luc persécuté* that Astruc is filming. There is nothing surprising about this. His admiration for the author of *Signes parmi nous* has long been known. But why, a moment ago, the author of *L'Albatros*?[4] Because the first shot of *Une Vie* stamps the whole film with its Baudelairean effigy. Because Maria Schell runs headlong towards the sea and Pascale's dress is like an echo illustrating the most celebrated verses of the man who said to Manet, 'You are supreme in the decadence of your art.' One might mention Thomas Hardy, as well as Faulkner and the Charlotte Rittenmayer of *The Wild Palms*, here transposed into the character played by Marquand; but Astruc himself has already talked of them so much – too much – that the admirers of *Le Rideau* are now looking for difficulties and being surprised to find none. All of which proves what? That people talked of painting without noticing that *Une Vie* was a novelist's film; and of taste without noticing that it is a barbarian's film.

My defence of the film against those who admire it for the wrong reasons is now done. Against the rest, the task is easier, for *Une Vie* is almost the opposite of an Astruc film in the sense that he has been labelled with a prefabricated aesthetic from which he is now escaping.

It is of no consequence that the version currently showing in cinemas does not correspond to the one envisaged in the scenario. It is of no consequence that the montage has systematically cut off each scene in mid-flow. One may admire *Une Vie* as it stands. And as it stands, *Une Vie* is the opposite of an inspired film. The madness behind the realism, said Astruc in an interview. But this has been misunderstood. Julien's madness lies in having married Jeanne, and Jeanne's in having married Julien. Full stop and finish. He was not trying to film *La Folie du Docteur Tube*,[5] but to show that for a man of wood and a woman of soul to marry is madness. As a matter of fact, *Une Vie* disconcerts Astruc's keenest partisans, just as *Le Plaisir* disconcerted those who thought they knew Maupassant. Where they expected Astruc the lyricist, they found Astruc the architect.

Une Vie is a superbly constructed film. So, to illustrate my point, I shall borrow images from classical geometry. A film may be compared to a *geometrical locus*; that is, a figure constituted by all the points which satisfy a particular equation of relation to a fixed element. This ensemble of points is, if you like, the *mise en scène*, and this particular equation common to each moment of the *mise en scène* will, therefore, be the scenario, or if you prefer, the dramatic situation. There remains the fixed element, or possibly mobile one, which is none other than the theme. But the following thing happens. With most directors, the *geometrical locus* of the theme they are supposed to be dealing with extends no further than the location where it is filmed. What I mean is that although the action of their films may take place over a vast area, most directors do not *think* their *mise en scène* beyond the area of the set. Astruc, on the other hand, gives the impression of having thought his film over the whole perimeter required by the action – no more, no less. In

The vertical principle: *Une Vie*

Une Vie, we are only shown three or four landscapes in Normandy. Yet the film gives an uncanny feeling of having been *planned on the actual scale of Normandy*, just as *Tabu* was for the Pacific, or *Que Viva Mexico!* for Mexico. The references may be exaggerated. But they are there. The fact is too remarkable not to be pointed out, and it is all the more remarkable in that Astruc and Laudenbach have deliberately made difficulties for themselves by only showing, as I have just noted, three or four aspects of the Norman woodlands. The difficulty is not in showing the forest, but in showing a room where one *knows* that the forest is a few paces away; an even greater difficulty is, not in showing the sea, but a room where one *knows* the sea is a few hundred yards away. Most films are constructed over the few square feet of décor visible in the viewfinder. *Une Vie* is conceived, written and directed over twenty thousand square kilometres.

Over this immense invisible space, Astruc has established his dramatic and visual co-ordinates. Between the abscissa and the ordinate no curve appears which might correspond to a secret movement of the film. The only curve is either the abscissa or the ordinate, and therefore corresponds to two kinds of movement, one horizontal, the other vertical. The whole *mise en scène* of *Une Vie* is based on this elementary principle. Horizontal, Maria Schell and Pascale Petit running towards the beach. Vertical, Marquand bending to take his partner's hand on the harbour jetty. Horizontal, the bridal couple

leaving after the wedding-banquet. Vertical, the knife stroke which rips open the bodice. Horizontal again, the movement of Jeanne and Julien sprawling in the wheatfield. Vertical again, the movement of Marquand's hand seizing Antonella Lualdi's wrist. For Astruc, the *mise en scène* of *Une Vie* has simply meant emphasizing one of these two movements, horizontal or vertical, in each scene or each shot having its own dramatic unity, and emphasizing it abruptly, so that everything before or after it which does not form part of this abrupt motion is left in shadow.

In *Les Mauvaises Rencontres* Astruc was still using this sort of effect, this premeditated violence, in the manner of Bardem: as a shot changed, a door opened, a glass shattered, a face turned. In *Une Vie*, on the other hand, he uses it within a shot, pushing the example of Brooks – or, more especially, Nicholas Ray – so far that *the effect becomes almost the cause*. The beauty is not so much in Marquand dragging Maria Schell out of the château as in the abruptness with which he does it. This abruptness of gesture which gives a fresh impulse to the suspense every few minutes, this discontinuity latent in its continuity, might be called the tell-tale heart of *Une Vie*, to show the kinship of this so-called 'cold' film with Edgar Poe, the true master of mystery and the most abstract writer of all.

Une Vie is a wonderfully simple film, exactly like *Bitter Victory*. And simplification does not mean stylization. Astruc is very different here from Visconti, with whom it would be silly to compare him. Certainly Maria Schell was more effectively used in *White Nights*; but in *Une Vie* she is used more accurately and more profoundly. In his time, Maupassant was doubtless a modern writer. Paradoxically, therefore, the best way of capturing the true nineteenth-century atmosphere was to give the whole thing a frankly 1958 atmosphere. In this Astruc and Laudenbach have succeeded magnificently. As proof, I need only cite the admirable line spoken by the admirable Christian Marquand to the woman who has offered him her dowry and her château: 'Because of you, I have ruined my life.' Another example: whereas Jean-Claude Pascal carrying Anouk Aimée seemed old-fashioned (in *Les Mauvaises Rencontres*), here the same gesture with Marquand and Maria Schell seems modern.

Once one has raved about Pascale Petit (with whom Astruc has worked as much of a miracle as Renoir with Françoise Arnoul in *French-Cancan*), who runs through the forest as gracefully as Orvet[6] and hides under the bedclothes better than Vadim's girls, one has not said all. On the threshold of the unknown: this might be a better title for *Une Vie* than for a science-fiction film. For *Une Vie* forces the cinema to turn its gaze elsewhere.

48: *Les Cousins*

Les Cousins, Claude Chabrol's second feature, written in collaboration with the novelist Paul Gégauff, will add an unpublished chapter to *La Comédie humaine*. What we will see, in effect, is Rubempré taking up his abode with Rastignac.[1]

But *Les Cousins* will also be La Fontaine brought up to date. We shall see a town rat called Jean-Claude Brialy tyrannizing a country rat called Gérard Blain, not forgetting the presence of a grasshopper called Juliette Mayniel.

All things considered, *Les Cousins* will be essentially a perfect Chabrol film, since it will be the reverse of *Le Beau Serge*.

In any case, *Les Cousins* will be no Carné film. You will not find Paul, Florence or Charles cheating[2] on themselves. They are great souls. They love poker. But they know that the only way to bluff is still to tell the whole truth. Charles, moreover, will die as a result, for Paul has read in Cocteau just how far he has the right to go too far.[3]

Les Cousins, in short, will be an engaging film which will disengage you from worldly considerations, a false film which will offer its home truths, a deeply hollow and therefore profound film.

49: *Un Drôle de Dimanche*

Marc Allégret is not at all a sad specimen. He's a funny person. If one of Max Ophuls's favourite heroes – the one often played by Anton Walbrook – should suddenly take it into his head to make films, he would surely make Marc Allégret films: always terribly bungled, disarmingly anxious to do the right thing, not in the least boring for anyone who enjoys spotting starlets in every corner of the screen, not so much vulgar as insipidly well bred – in a word, not so much far from good as close to being bad.

Un Drôle de Dimanche proves it for the *n*th time. In this third production from the Jean-Jacques Vital[1] factory, everything denotes this or explains that: non-existence in a pure state. But, you will say, this story of a deserted husband who finds his wife and plans to kill her is aimed at the audience which likes *Nous Deux, Intimité* and the rest of the *photo-romans*.[2] But to speculate on the vulgarity of the public implies contempt, and the spectator often has his revenge by keeping away from the film. Too naïvely conscientious, Marc Allégret no longer even realizes that he has unconsciously come to despise the cinema.

Un Drôle de Dimanche, therefore, is of no interest whatsoever. The script is lamentable, so are the actors. When the roast is bad, you cover up with the sauce, but you can't save much of a Serge de Boissac script with Bourvil, nor Jean Marsan dialogue with Cathia Caro. With Jean-Paul Belmondo[3] you just might, since he is the Michel Simon and Jules Berry of tomorrow; even so this brilliant actor would have to be used differently and elsewhere.

That's enough. It's preaching in a wilderness, anyway, which isn't even Pigalle.[4] Marc Allégret, I like you very much. You are one of the nicest of film-makers . . . but not of the faith.[5]

50: Georges Franju

Just as one says 'L'amour fou', we shall soon be talking about Franju's first feature as 'le cinéma fou'. *La Tête contre les murs* is a madman's film about madmen. So it is a madly beautiful film.

From a dense novel whose style is not unreminiscent of the good Goncourt Brothers, Mocky and Pichon have extracted a completely original script and more than model dialogue. Everything here is brand new, as well as having a superb interior logic.

One recalls the famous article[1] in which Franju, with the subtlety of a Roger Leenhardt, analysed the organic unity and pathos in composition of, not *Potemkin* of course, but *M*. It only remains, therefore, to place *La Tête contre les murs*, this satellite of the new French cinema today, within the only possible orbit for it – that of rational frenzy, of controlled madness, of Fritz Langian dislocation such as Baudelaire loved in Poe; the orbit, in other words, where reigns the atmosphere of *Ministry of Fear* rather than *M*, and even more than *Ministry of Fear*, of *Mabuse*.

Parenthetically, in this issue of *Cahiers* devoted to the young film-makers of the modern French film industry, it would be wrong not to cite, alongside those who have taken over from Duvivier, Clouzot, Joannon, Carné, Hunebelle, Cayatte, Allégret, Decoin, Autant-Lara, Delannoy, Calef, Rim, Clément, Grémillon, Moguy, the names of those who for their part are taking or have already boldly taken over from Prévert, Jeanson, Sigurd, Achard, Tabet, Ferry, Wheeler, Aurenche, Laroche, Bost, Andréota, Barjavel, Robert.

Come like their elders from journalism, television, the novel, the theatre, in fact everything which according to Cocteau harbours poetry, they are called Paul Gégauff, Marcel Moussy, Louis Sapin, Marguerite Duras, Yves Gibeau, Jean-Charles Pichon, de Vilmorin, and if they are not legion, at least money has not yet numbed their fingers, and it is not their *job* but their *pleasure* to write scripts and dialogue. Close parenthesis and let us return to our madmen, to the wonderful Charles Aznavour climbing over the asylum wall, escaping into the forest in the direction of the sea, and crying 'We're free!' as he suddenly collapses on his back, his arms outflung in a cross.

La Tête contre les murs is an *inspired* film. For Franju, carrying things to their logical conclusion has consisted this time in discovering, not the madness behind reality, but reality once again behind this same madness. Unlike *Sang des bêtes* and *Hôtel des Invalides*, where the brief running time may perhaps have forced Franju into some too deliberately provocative effects, the *mise en scène* of *La Tête contre les murs* is rigorously *discreet*. The beauty of this film is that it is beautiful because it is Cartesian. It may be that Franju does not know how to direct actors. But Jean-Pierre Mocky, Anouk Aimée, Paul Meurisse and Pierre Brasseur have never been better, their delivery more perfect. They do not act. They *quiver*.

A motor-cyclist plunges down a ravine, a girl in a bathing-suit climbs the ladder of a houseboat[2] at night, headlights track along an asylum wall, an electric train weaves through a garden, a car looms out of a ghostly knot of trees photographed by Schuftan, the lights of Paris dazzle an escaped madman, great white pigeons set Aznavour to dreaming. Unlike Hitchcock but

like Lang, with Franju one remembers scenes rather than shots, which is the sign of the Dionysiac film-maker.

To cite Cocteau again: in the incomparable *Orphée*, Jean Marais, stoned by the false poets, cries to Heurtebise, 'What does the marble say as it is being carved into a masterpiece? It says, "They are reviling me, beating me", but it knows this is not true.' The same goes for the strip of celluloid on which Georges Franju imprinted *La Tête contre les murs*.

51: B.B. of the Rhine

Liane – White Slave, in this sequel to *Liane, Jungle Goddess*,[1] is still Marion Michael, a sort of Brigitte Bardot revised and corrected to suit the equivalent beyond the Rhine of *imagerie* sheets.[2] Naked as a baby, she gambols clumsy but carefree among the elephants, tigers and savages. Why get all solemn about it? The script is by Ernst von Salomon, and the savages, tigers and elephants are from stock shots inserted with amiable regularity into the action. There is, of course, a wicked slave-trader who does his best to sample the tender flesh of our Voodoo priestess. But a big-hearted explorer foils his dastardly plot. Otherwise, three excellent shots of Marion Michael, filmed with a telephoto lens in very short shorts and shirt among the natives of Abidjan or some such city, are worth mention. This is neo-realism pure and simple, and the only way to make a real film about Africa. One man has understood this. His name is Jean Rouch, and his film, *Treichville*.[3] This also happens to be the greatest French film since the Liberation.

52: Ignored by the Jury

Two films completely eclipsed all their rivals at the Fourth International Festival of Short Films at Tours. Two more managed to dominate fairly easily. But none of these four greater or lesser masterpieces figured in the awards. This one might have expected. The Tours Festival has been inclined to have an eye rather bigger than its belly. In going international, it has of course succeeded only in becoming more academic than Cannes or Venice in their bad days.

This is a pity, for in other respects the 'Journées du Cinéma' do an excellent job.

These four films are: firstly, *Le Bel Indifférent*, a complete revelation this time of Jacques Demy, and *Le Chant du Styrène*, which confirms Alain Resnais; and secondly, *O Saisons, ô Châteaux*, which confirms Agnès Varda, and *Blue Jeans*, a revelation of Jacques Rozier. I know what the answer will be: that only *Le Bel Indifférent* was officially entered in competition, the other three being merely invited. But when one thinks that *Blue Jeans* was waived from competition for committing the sin of vulgarity, whereas it was on the contrary the freshest, most childishly pure, young and likeable film shown during these stale and horribly serious days; when one thinks that instead of Alain Resnais's wonderful cantata, instead of this Mass in CinemaScope and colour about the Péchiney refineries, a slavish copy was preferred for the competition in Robert Menegoz's film about Lacq,[1] one suddenly feels a

desperate need to dig one's heels in: not to mention the prizewinners, that is, or the sixty-odd other films, but to concentrate exclusively on Agnès Varda, Jacques Demy, Alain Resnais and Jacques Rozier – the French cinema of the future.

As a matter of fact this is the only critical advantage afforded by the internationalization of the Tours Festival. All things considered, France emerges as a brilliant victor in the light of this Franco-foreign confrontation. Worthless as it is, for instance, *Les Bains de mer* by Jean Lhôte and Charles Prost still outclasses its Belgian satirical equivalent, *Gestes du repas*;[2] and crudely sensational as it is, J. J. Languepin's *Des Hommes dans le ciel* still outclasses its Czech dramatic equivalent, *Dangerous Trades*.[3]

The one exception, however, is animated films: McLaren, of course, with his delightful *Le Merle*, and quite a few more, including Popesco-Gopo with his amusing and inventive series on the seven arts; the Pole Borowczyk with *Sentiments recompensés*, very artistically accompanied by the Warsaw Gas Company's wind orchestra; and the American John Hubley, whose *Tender Game* would surely have delighted Mademoiselle de Scudéry.[4] But animated films apart, every film from Germany (Federal or otherwise), Russia, Portugal, Brazil, Canada, Japan, Britain, Hungary, was either terrifyingly empty or unbelievably incompetent.

So, as I was saying, two films eclipsed all the rest by their majesty and control. *Le Bel Indifférent* has the edge over *Le Chant du Styrène* in that it was booed during the screening. Who was to blame? The producers themselves, S.N. Pathé-Cinéma, whose grotesque excision of ten minutes from this remarkable film has made it ten times more mysterious and difficult to understand than it was. In fact Jacques Demy had filmed Cocteau's celebrated monologue in a manner so terribly simple, so terribly pure, that any betrayal the Cocteau of *La Voix humaine* might have felt was simply in favour of the Cocteau of *Renaud et Armide*.[5] The screen on which *Le Bel Indifférent* is projected is the mirror before which Cocteau paraded and behind which Demy is now hidden. This year, however, two Chinamen have been awarded the Nobel Prize for demonstrating that things do not necessarily happen behind a mirror as they do in front of it, and that, contrary to the famous laws of parity, reality sometimes acts differently from its reflection. The beauty of Jacques Demy's film is thus scientifically verified. And Roger Leenhardt[6] is wrong in maintaining that Demy should have moved his camera at the same pace as Cocteau's text. Moreover, the modern French cinema owes so much to the director of *Les Parents terribles* and the man who wrote the diary of the shooting of *La Belle et la Bête*, that I find it absolutely incredible that anyone can now speak ill of *Le Bel Indifférent*. In filming it, Jacques Demy had the remarkably noble purpose of wanting to repay his debt, and at the same time make a second film. A setting of fantastic beauty, carpeted by the blood of the poet or tiled with the azure that enfevered Rimbaud, a setting created by Bernard Evein, has enabled Demy to back three winners with absolute rigour, the beauty of inevitability, palpable tragedy. It is the most

Jeanne Allard in *Le Bel Indifférent*

sensational treble in the whole history of the French cinema. His *Bel Indifférent* is Piero della Francesca plus Picasso (cf. Jeanne Allard's decoratively tortured face)[7] plus *Bérénice*. What a collection! people will say. What a confection! say I. Jacques Demy really has entered the cinema, as Raymond Queneau's Pierrot has entered literature. And talking about Jacquot my friend[8] will now let me move to *Chant du Styrène*. In fact, thanks to this unusual aesthetic slant, I can readily say that the director of *Nuit et Brouillard* has let himself be guided, to his advantage, by the author of *Odile* towards the director of *Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?*

Le Chant du Styrène is a brilliantly mounted[9] film: and of what does one say such a thing but a piece of jewellery? When I first saw the film, I said to myself: It is impossible for Alain Resnais to go further than *Toute la mémoire du monde*, it is time for him to take the plunge into features. I was mistaken. I was wrong to think that *Le Chant du Styrène* could only, must only, be a negative film, like the other side of a décor (non-existent anyhow). For on the CinemaScope screen of the Olympia at Tours, *Le Chant du Styrène* seemed to me an Olympian film, of matchless gravity. 'Make documentaries and first of all film mountains', said Lubitsch, 'then you will be ready to film people.' So *Hiroshima, mon amour* will be one of the great films, because *Le Chant du Styrène* proves that Alain Resnais has definitively mastered the secret of matter. A film like this discourages interpretation. It makes a formidable

impression (in the Latin sense of the word). Its slowness is merely apparent, like the helix turning at a thousand revolutions a minute. Each shot of *Le Chant du Styrène*, Alain Resnais's fantastic farewell to the short film, has the cadence of a Bossuet[10] sentence. To speak ill of it is a crime of lese-majesty.

I have little space left to talk about Agnès Varda, the most extraordinary little person in the French cinema today. Hurry to see *O Saisons, ô châteaux*, showing as support to *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*. It is as good as anything you are likely to see in the genre of fashionable splendour, or vice versa. Also shown at Tours, her *Du côté de la Côte* is a very charming variation on the Côte d'Azur. But if one is going to praise Agnès Varda to the skies, it should be for *O Saisons, ô châteaux*. I have also little space left to say all that needs to be said about *Blue Jeans*. But Jacques Rozier need not worry. We will come back to his enjoyably excellent or vice versa film when it goes on release in support of *Mambo*.

53: Jean Rouch Wins the Delluc Prize

The jury for the Louis Delluc Prize have not had an easy task. Several variously remarkable films were proposed to them: *La Tête contre les murs* by Jean-Pierre Mocky and Georges Franju, *Les Cousins* by Claude Chabrol and Paul Gégauff, *Goha* by Jacques Baratier and Léopold Senghor, and *Je suis un Noir*[1] by Jean Rouch. After four ballots, Jean Rouch's feature finally won a majority of votes. Those who have already seen it can but concur with the opinion expressed by the president of the jury, Maurice Bessy: 'In selecting *Je suis un Noir*, we wished to pay tribute this time to an extraordinary film in homage to the possibilities of a new cinema.'

Everything, in effect, is completely new in Jean Rouch's film – script, shooting and sound recording. The heroes, called Edward G. Robinson, Eddie Constantine, Tarzan, Elite and Dorothy Lamour, are exiled Nigerians in the Abidjan suburb of Treichville, and they improvised the action as they went along before a camera obviously hand-held by Rouch. Subsequently, the director showed his cast a rough-cut and asked them to comment as they liked. We are thus presented with a text of wonderful verve and spontaneity. *Je suis un Noir* is a paving-stone in the marsh of French cinema, as *Rome, Open City* in its day was in world cinema.

54: The Ten Best Films of 1958

1. *The Quiet American* (Joseph L. Mankiewicz)
2. *Journey into Autumn* (Ingmar Bergman)
3. *Bonjour Tristesse* (Otto Preminger)
4. *Montparnasse 19* (Jacques Becker)
5. *Une Vie* (Alexandre Astruc)
6. *Man of the West* (Anthony Mann)
7. *Touch of Evil* (Orson Welles)
8. *L'Eau vive* (François Villiers)
9. *White Nights* (Luchino Visconti)
10. *Le Temps des oeufs durs* (Norbert Carbonnaux)

The Year of *A Bout de Souffle*: January–July 1959

Until the summer of 1959, Jean-Luc Godard continued to write regularly for Cahiers du Cinéma *and, particularly,* Arts. *Between 17 August and 15 September 1959, he suspended all critical activity to film* A Bout de Souffle. *The year 1959 also marks the birth and entrenchment of the phenomenon of the Nouvelle Vague. François Truffaut won the Grand Prix at the Cannes Festival in April with* Les Quatre Cents Coups, *Eric Rohmer made* Le Signe du Lion, *Jacques Rivette continued work on* Paris Nous Appartient, *while Claude Chabrol was making his third feature,* A Double Tour. *1959 is also the year of Georges Franju's* La Tête contre les murs *and Alain Resnais's* Hiroshima, mon amour, *both films of capital importance to the French cinema. Godard's last text for this period is the scenario of* Une Femme est une Femme, *which he was to film in 1961.*

55: *Pourvu qu'on ait l'Ivresse*

Before going into the cinema, make sure you ask, 'Is this the performance in which a short film by J.-D. Pollet called *Pourvu qu'on ait l'ivresse* is showing?' Above all, don't hesitate. *Pourvu qu'on ait l'ivresse* is a marvellous cocktail of reportage and fiction, something like the other side of the coin to *Nogent, Eldorado du Dimanche*,[1] or rather, like the sketch about the Roman dance-hall in *Love in the City*, only ten times better. It is even more cruel than *Terre sans pain*, since the moral is 'Come to the dance-hall, you won't get a girl', and as poetic as *Partie de campagne*. If you like this film, you will be of the same opinion as Becker, Cocteau, Melville, Audiberti and Bazin. To wit: that Jean-Daniel is a born film-maker.

Completing the programme with *Pourvu qu'on ait l'ivresse* is a feature by Jean Boyer,[2] starring Fernandel and based on a celebrated play by de Flers and Croisset. Film-lovers, abstain!

56: Take Your Own Tours

Once again the Short Film Festival has played its usual dirty trick on live film-making by awarding the prize to an animated film.

But before talking about the festival, custom and politeness require that one should first of all describe in terms of amiable flattery the city which flatters itself no less amiably on holding it. Thus every article about Venice

begins with the pigeons of St Mark's, about Berlin with the happy truce between Eastern and Western blocs (same for Karlovy Vary), and about Cannes with the charms of the starlets (same for Punta del Este and Locarno).

So, with which amusing cliché can one introduce an account of the Tours Festival? It so happens that by some miracle, Tours, a pleasant town without mystery, makes clichés impossible. Consequently, I can tell you this.

Tours for Me

I do not write to you from a far country. Yet even so everything separates us. In Paris all the houses are dark. Here the décor is Viscontian. All the houses are white. The décor is Bergmanian. All the streets are out of *Journey into Autumn*. The décor is Ophulsian. All the students are like those in *Lola Montès*. The décor is Premingerian. None of the schoolgirls look as if they had stepped out of a novel by Françoise Sagan.

Now you will know why Tours looks so gay. Because it is a modern provincial town. For something else you do not know, my dear Parisian friends, is that in sending me away from the lights of la Concorde in the Seine for three days with the stars in the Loire, in sending me away from the slot-machines in the rue Washington snack-bars[1] to those of the Grand Turc in Tours, you did not know that a two-hour train journey sufficed to make me exchange old Baudelaire for young Ronsard, and the bitter ashes of urban poetry and antiquated modernism for the poetry of the provinces and youthful modernism. Here, everything is new. And you will never know how boring, vulgar and sad Paris is seen from Tours. Or seen from Brest, Le Havre, Nantes or Saint-Nazaire.

As for you, my friends, who are so crazy about up-to-the-minute modernity, you did not realize that it was these very provinces you fled after the Liberation, saying 'Paris for me!', which would today be able to reveal its true face. Which? The one you seek so desperately through all your films, from Passy to the Latin Quarter by way of the most obsolete avenue in the world, the Champs-Elysées. This is why 'going up to Paris', that expression used in turn by Rastignac and Rubempré in the sense of 'going up into the line of attack', seemed even more meaningless than before as I got off the train at the Gare d'Austerlitz. For in the grey and smoke of Paris after my Tours excursion, instead of making me think as it should of victory and sunlight, Austerlitz made me think of defeat as I suddenly realized how much I regretted leaving the banks of the Loire to bury myself in Paris again.

The moral: the young French cinema must become a little less egotistically and more and more academically urban in spirit. Three-quarters of the subjects having contemporary relevance which it deals with would be better and more at home in a milieu other than Paris. This is why, for instance, I consider *L'Eau vive* to be the best French film of the year, in spite of its clumsy direction. Second moral: since one is always hearing how the short film in a sense represents the youth and aesthetic future of the cinema, it is an excellent, very original, idea to have the world panorama take place at

Tours, a perfect archetype of the young city with a brilliant future. Yes, but . . . ! Is the short film really, as they say, the future of the cinema? I would go even further: Is it cinema at all?

Down with Short Films

Short films are rarely written about in *Cahiers*, and some readers have taken us amiably to task for this. Tours 1958 has prompted us to fill this gap, and by explaining, justify it. For truth obliges me to say that none of us believes in the short film as such. I mean, that none of us has ever believed that on the one hand there was the short film with its principles and aesthetic possibilities, and on the other the feature, with other principles and other aesthetic possibilities. In other words, if we write only rarely about short films in general and in particular, sometimes even neglecting to mention those we like because they reveal or confirm a film-maker, it is because – unlike such people as Paul Paviot, Jean Mitry, Albert Lamorisse, Henri Gruel and quite a few others – we simply do not believe in shorts. I do not mean that they believe only in short films. Their one desire is to make features. I know this, and wish them luck. But when I say that they are wrong to believe in the short film as such, I simply mean to say that they are wrong to believe in some special function of the short film, as Claude Mauriac[2] would say – or as Bazin would put it, in some ontology peculiar to the short film and quite different from the ontology of the feature. And, Bazin again: they are wrong to believe, not in the existence of the short film, but in its essence.

And we of *Cahiers* believe in it even less now that most of us have begun over the past few years to squander celluloid ourselves. For if we have spoken a little too much about Alain Resnais's *Toute la mémoire du monde*, for instance, it is because we shall talk a great deal about *Hiroshima, mon amour*, and it will be the same thing. And if we have neglected to speak about Jean-Daniel Pollet's *Pourvu qu'on ait l'ivresse*, we will make up for it with *La Ligne de Mire*, and that will come to the same thing. We never spoke about Georges Franju's *La Première nuit* either, but we have already done so of *La Tête contre les murs*. We may have neglected to speak of Jean Rouch's short films, but we have done much better: in praising *L'Eau vive* so highly, we were already praising *Treichville*[3] – one need only multiply a thousandfold. In the same way, in talking about the feeling for nature in *To Catch a Thief* and *Vertigo*, we had already found the necessary words to applaud Agnès Varda and François Reichenbach, or in talking about *Juvenile Passion*,[4] the words to praise *Blue Jeans*. And we would be delighted if Roger Leenhardt were to take the plunge into feature film-making again; for then we could talk about the subtlety and lucidity of his little documentaries. For there is no difference in kind between a short film and a feature, only – given the industrial organization of the cinema – in degree. Or rather, there shouldn't be. But there is, and we shall see why.

Short Film = Anti-Cinema

Broadly speaking, everything proceeds as though the classical point of view

– which can be expressed more or less as follows: one must defend the short film because it is the cinema's equivalent of the short story in literature – were not totally false. One could find hundreds of ways of proving this. In the first place, no one has ever taken up pen to defend the short story in relation to the novel. If he writes a *Duchesse de Langeais*, the writer plans it quite frankly as an episode in *L'Histoire des treize*. Then, one can easily demonstrate that film adaptations of short stories have been consistently bad when treated within the framework of the short film. To make a short from Mérimée's *La Double Méprise*, for instance, is to condemn oneself in advance to failure, for the single and imperatively childish reason that a short film is not long enough to allow one to study the characters in sufficient depth or to round out the action.

Why is Rossellini's sketch about Ingrid Bergman and her hen the best in *We . . . the Women*, and his 'Envy' the best in *Les Sept péchés capitaux*? Because Rossellini has not tried to provoke artificial suspense by pulling the strings of an equally artificial plot; he has contented himself with stretching out an emotion without attempting to analyse it, for had he analysed it, he would have made *Europe 51* or *Fear*.

A short film does not have the time for an explicit study in depth. In *Les Dames du Bois de Boulogne*, Mme de la Pommeraye's machination can be described in nine minutes – the time it takes to read Diderot's text. But it is the Bresson film which is worth making, not a short lasting nine minutes. What about a sketch film made by a single director, you may say, *Le Plaisir* for instance? But it is obvious that Max Ophuls deliberately chose to compose a triptych, or at least, deliberately agreed to do so. Each panel would remain very fine even if separated from the rest, of course, just like any single panel of Grünewald's Isenheim Altarpiece. Nevertheless, it remains greater seen as a whole. For after all, what is pleasure without love and death?

The same argument applies to *Flowers of St Francis*, *Paisa*, and soon to *India 58*. But what about *The Miracle*? Or, more especially, *The Human Voice*? I shall return to the latter in a moment apropos of Jacques Demy's *Le Bel Indifférent*. As for *The Miracle* and films like it, they fall into the category of short feature, or full-length feature in disguise. In other words, they express intentions, a philosophy, a conception of the world, comic or tragic, optimistic or despairing, what you will. The important point is that in a feature, the film-maker establishes a theorem, whereas in a short he can at best make use of the results of this theorem.

To take this to its conclusion: a short film does not have the time to *think*. It therefore belongs to that impure cinema to which André Bazin wished a long life: with good reason, moreover, since through this very impurity it enables, *a contrario*, many directors to prove their talent. So the short film is useful to the cinema in a way, but like the antibody in medicine. For if it is cinema in spite of everything, this is primarily because it is anti-cinema. The Fourth International Festival of Short Films at Tours offered flagrant proof of this. What did we see?

Vive La France

We saw that, over-all, the French shorts – excluding animated films – dominated the discussions and easily outclassed those from other countries. Why? Because even when it is badly composed, badly shot, badly edited, one feels, one senses that there is an artist behind the French camera; whereas even when it is well composed, well shot, well edited, behind the foreign cameras one senses, one feels that there are only craftsmen. In this sense, historians of the cinema are absolutely justified in celebrating the existence of a genuine school of French short film-making, exactly as their art colleagues celebrate the famous School of Paris.

Today the short film, subsidized by the system of 'prizes for quality'[5] – there is no shame in this: the Italian princes also had the wisdom once to subsidize the Roman and Florentine schools – has become almost an institution. It has its customs, its laws, its commercial or aesthetic imperatives, and like all self-respecting schools, it very quickly acquired its academicism too. But this is less serious if one is an artist, even an academic one, than if one is a craftsman, even a superior one. Do not forget that the Convention is the daughter of the Revolution. The simple fact that he is an artist automatically makes even a bad artist superior to the most gifted craftsman. A bad Buñuel will always be better than the most skilful René Clément, a bad Visconti better than the best Autant-Lara. With an artist one may always hope that he will attempt to excel himself; with a craftsman, never. Because a craftsman is merely an employee of art. And all the foreign shorts at Tours gave me the impression of having been made by employees of the short film. Even if I hate them, at least the films of Paviot or Lamorisse have never left me with this depressing impression.

Now, here I find the proof of what I was saying earlier. It is precisely to the extent that they believe in the value of the short film as such that foreign documentaries are least satisfactory. Take *Treize à Lagor*, for instance, Robert Menegoz's documentary about the Lacq gas. To my mind it is a very inferior work to *Le Chant du Styrène*, Alain Resnais's documentary about the Péchiney refineries, but at least it *is* a work. As such, even though conventional under its show of originality, it is more subtle and more intelligent than a film like the Czech *Dangerous Trades*, by Bruno Sefranka. This is to say, if you like, that Menegoz is to Sefranka as Resnais is to Menegoz. And for this demonstration I could have chosen, instead of the Czech, a Pole, a Russian, a Belgian, a German to compare with Edouard Logereau, Jean Lhôte, Charles Prost, Georges Bourdelon – and compared the latter to their superiors, Jacques Demy and his *Bel Indifférent*, Agnès Varda and her Côte d'Azur or her Loire, Jacques Rozier and his *Blue Jeans*, runners-up to my personal prizewinner, the incomparable *Styrène*.

Impossible is not French

These films, in effect, dominated Tours 1958, and for what seems to me the excellent reason that they have each taken one of the four narrow paths to

aesthetic safety open to the short film. The short, I claimed in an earlier paragraph, only remains cinema in so far as it no longer is. Today a short film must be intelligent in that it can no longer afford to be naïve like, for instance, Griffith's *The New York Hat* or Chaplin's *The Fireman*. By this I mean that in Sennett's day, cinematographic invention was based on spontaneity; this was, so to speak, the starting-point of all aesthetic effort, whereas today it is the end. Growing more elaborate as the footage increased, it has become less and less natural and more and more deliberate. So much so that, looking at it from an historical point of view, I conclude this: to make a short film today is in a way to return to the cinema's beginnings. So it is hardly surprising that one of the first shorts by Roger Leenhardt – an intelligent man if ever there was one – is in fact called *La Naissance du Cinéma*. For this instinctive spontaneity can now be replaced only by its opposite, purposeful intelligence. And it is because this inner contradiction is also its sole aesthetic trump that the short film has for long and by definition been a false genre. To make short films has become synonymous with attempting the impossible.

Let us suppose, for example, that you are commissioned to make a film about railways. Now, as we have just seen, at the time of *L'Arrivée en gare de la Ciotat* a train was a subject for a film: the proof, I would almost add, is that Lumière made the film. But today a train, as such, is no longer an original film subject, but simply a theme which can be exploited. So you will be faced by the extraordinarily difficult task of having to shoot, not a subject, but the reverse or shadow of this subject; and of attempting to create cinema while knowing beforehand that you are venturing into anti-cinema. The best shorts will, therefore, be those able to extricate themselves from this aesthetic fix. How? Through the freedom of travel sketches, like Agnès Varda in *Du côté de la Côte*; through the rigours of theatrical construction, like Jacques Demy in *Le Bel Indifférent*; the grace of a *tableau vivant*, like Jacques Rozier in *Blue Jeans*; the quest for the absolute, like Alain Resnais in *Le Chant du Styrène*.

In the Hands of a Camerawoman

There are several ways one could talk about Agnès Varda's short films. The first would be to follow chronological order: *O Saisons, ô châteaux*, shot in autumn 1957, *Opéra Mouffe* last spring, and *Du côté de la Côte* last summer, the uneven ones being in colour, subsidized by some Ministry or other, and shown at Tours. One could also say that *O Saisons, ô châteaux* represents poetry by way of a Ronsardian aesthetic, *Opéra Mouffe* the theatre through its Brechtian approach, and *Du côté de la Côte* literature through its Proustian title, not belied by its images from Giraudoux. But instead of seeking the differences, let us instead seek analogies and note the common feature of Agnès's shorts, their chief characteristic, which enables them to escape the aesthetic fix I was talking about.

They are to the cinema as a sketch is to a painting and an outline to a

novel. They are above all journals, on each page of which irony makes a triple somersault to land on the following page at the feet of beauty, luxury or delight. A ship's log as Agnès Varda cruises along the Loire, and a journal of a woman of the world, too, casting a wary eye on the dungeons of Blois, the trees of Tours, the stones of Azay-le-Rideau. An intimate diary as she strolls, pregnant, from Denfert to Contrescarpe. And finally, the journal of a woman of wit as she roams between Nice and Saint-Tropez, sending us a postcard with each shot in reply to her friend Chris Marker.

Du côté de la Côte is an admirable film. It is France Roche[6] multiplied by the Chateaubriand of *Impressions d'Italie*, the Delacroix of *Croquis africains*, the Mme de Staël of *De l'Allemagne*, the Proust of *Pastiches et Mélanges*, the Aragon of *Anicet ou le Panorama*, the Giraudoux of *La France sentimentale*, and I forget who else. But I shall never forget the wonderful pan back and forth along the branch of a tree twisted in the sand, and ending on the red and blue sandals of Adam and Eve. I should note here that wood is one of Agnès Varda's key materials, one of the leitmotif images of her films. And I should also like to say in this connection that *La Pointe courte*[7] gains retrospectively from being seen after *Du côté de la Côte*. But I have no time. There is too much to say. It is like diamonds, which sparkle from a thousand facets. For in the French film industry, Agnès Varda's short films shine like tiny jewels.

Introduction to the Method of Jacques Demy

I only like films which resemble their creators. With Jacques Demy, it takes half an hour to navigate the Place de l'Etoile in a car. So it takes half an hour to watch a cobbler make a shoe[8], and half an hour to share a woman's realization that her lover really is indifferent. There exists, unfortunately, a strong prejudice against slowness. People who do not like *Ordet*, for instance, say that it is a slow film. The same people say the same thing about *Le Bel Indifférent*. They are of course wrong for two reasons.

Firstly, *Le Bel Indifférent* is not really so very slow. It is rather like one of those sports cars which are forced by the great power of their engines to run in crescendo and without faltering to a point of extreme tension when they come to rest, like the indicator of a bolide when it hits ceiling at 240. And secondly, a film is neither good nor bad because it is fast or slow. The quality of *Two Pennyworth of Hope*,[9] for instance, does not come from its speed (apparent: it is a film in which nothing happens) but from the appropriateness of this speed. Nor does the quality of *Ordet* come from its slowness (apparent: it is a film in which thousands of things happen) but from the appropriateness of this slowness.

And the chief quality of Jacques Demy's film is above all its admirable, total appropriateness. Here I refer you to the 'photograph of the month' in our April issue of last year which featured a shot from *Mon Oncle* on the cover – a film which *Le Bel Indifférent* easily surpasses in beauty of both

colour and décor. It is impossible to explain better than Rohmer [10] did there why Demy's film could not, *should* not, be other than it is. Everybody knows the principle of Cocteau's famous sketch: the monologue of a woman attempting to detain a lover who is not listening. The monologue being a theatrical device, Demy was *logically* obliged to outbid this device, to double the theatricality. For after this passage through appearances, he discovers the cinema as Orphée found Eurydice, and also discovers Cocteau. For he also, one must not forget, had to be faithful to the author of *La Voix humaine*. And Demy has had the great intelligence to realize that he could only, *must* only, do this by taking the opposite approach to that of *Les Parents terribles* in his *mise en scène*. The error, in fact, would have been any attempt to imitate Nicole Stéphane's[11] intonations in Melville's film. And it was thus that in listening to Jeanne Allard speaking her inimitable lines *recto tono*, I suddenly thought of Malraux's words: 'One day I wrote a novel about a man who heard the sound of his own voice, and I called this novel *La Condition humaine*.'

Let us see if Rozier

Blue Jeans belongs to a category of short film which is false in principle, being half-way between documentary and narrative fiction. Art is difficult here, for as we have seen, one must on the one hand introduce a plot to lend it the suspense natural to the full-length film, while on the other one has not enough time to develop this plot with the necessary care. Therefore, since one *must* tell a story, one must take only the beginning and the end – in other words, schematize – which involves the aesthetic risk of making something seem theoretic when one is trying to make it seem living. So one must make sure that the dramatic structure constitutes a simple emotion, simple enough to allow one time to analyse it in depth, and also strong enough to justify the enterprise.

I do not imagine that Jacques Rozier took any such Cartesian arguments into consideration while shooting *Blue Jeans*. But his film exists to verify them. Instead of banking on studied casualness like Agnès Varda, or on the power of poetry like Demy, Rozier has staked everything on lucidity within improvisation. *Blue Jeans* is consequently a short film as fresh, young and handsome as those bodies of twenty-year-olds which Rimbaud spoke of.[12] Here the truth of the document makes common cause with the grace of the narration. True are the two layabouts who patrol Cannes on scooters in search of girls; graceful the long tracking shots along the Croisette or the rue d'Antibes, boldly edited one after the other in direct cuts. True the dialogue and the attitudes; graceful the realism of the photography and the shutters which poetically scan the afternoon on the warm sand. I do not see why Carlos Villardebo's *Vivre* should be considered a very human film and not Jacques Rozier's *Blue Jeans*, since it is a film about time passing – in doing what? In exchanging kisses. So its moral, both gay and sad, is that of Louis Aragon's quatrain:[13]

In the crossways of kisses
The years pass too quickly
Beware beware beware
Shattered memories.

In Search of Cinema

If the short film did not already exist, Alain Resnais would surely have invented it. He alone gives the impression that it is in his eyes something other than a short film. From the unseeing and trembling pans of *Van Gogh* to the majestic tracking shots of *Styrène*, what is it, in effect, that we see? An exploration of the possibilities of cinematographic technique, but one so rigorous that it outstrips its own purpose, and without which the young French cinema of today would simply not exist. For Alain Resnais, more than any other, gives the impression of having started completely from scratch. From *Van Gogh* onwards, a movement of the camera gave the impression that it was not simply a movement of the camera but an exploration of the secret of this movement. A secret which André Bazin, another solitary explorer, also starting from scratch, by a moving coincidence discovered at the same time but by different means.

Before being able to move on to features with a clear conscience, Resnais, too, had to discover, to lay bare this mysterious secret. And if, for instance, *Les Statues meurent aussi* proved the tracking shot through montage, conversely montage had to be proved in turn through the tracking shot. Which *Toute la mémoire du monde* in a small way, but more especially *Le Chant du Styrène*, did. It so happened that I saw *October* again at the Cinémathèque a few days before seeing *Styrène* for the first time. And after a second viewing I can now say what I dared not then: Alain Resnais is the second greatest editor in the world after Eisenstein. Editing, to them, means organizing cinematographically; in other words planning dramatically, composing musically, or in yet other words, the finest, film-making.

Never, I believe, since Eisenstein has a film been so scientifically conceived as *Le Chant du Styrène*. One example will suffice. Robert Menegoz is wandering in the Lacq refineries, which have commissioned him to make a short film. He meets some workmen in red overalls with gas-masks over their faces. Immediately he says to himself: 'Oh! that is so science fiction, I absolutely must have that in my film.' On the same day, more or less, Alain Resnais was wandering in the Péchiney refineries, which had commissioned him to make a short film. And he, too, met some workmen with gas-masks. And like Menegoz, he filmed them with science fiction in mind. But there the analogy ends. In thinking about the feeling which made him film these workers from Mars, Resnais realized he could strengthen this feeling. How? By cutting out these masked men in the editing, whereas Menegoz kept them in. Alain Resnais's strength is that he always goes one step further than anyone else. This is why Molinaro's tracking shots in *Les Alchimistes*, another short made in the same Péchiney factory, round the same vats and along the same pipes,

are nothing compared to those of Alain Resnais. Simply because Resnais has *invented* the modern tracking shot, its breakneck speed, its abrupt start and slow arrival, or vice versa. Simply because he asked himself questions about the problem, and solved them.

Le Chant du Styrène is fourteen months of work for a film lasting fourteen minutes about plastics. It is also a commentary by Raymond Queneau which makes each image Tashlinesque by introducing the famous dislocation dear to Renoir. And the result is there, in CinemaScope and colour: shots so closely interwoven one with another in spite of the absence of any living character (which means there can be no easy recourse to cutting on dramatic effect), some one hundred shots so harmoniously welded to each other that they give the extraordinary feeling of being one long sequence shot, a single, Jupiterian tracking shot whose wonderful phrasing is not without its echoes of the great cantatas of Johann Sebastian Bach.

Du côté de la Côte, Le Bel Indifférent, Blue Jeans, Le Chant du Styrène: it is easy now to conclude. Henceforth, the beauty of any short film must be that of one of these four, or no beauty at all.

57: Supermann: *Man of the West*

A man (Gary Cooper) is in a little local train when it is attacked by bandits. Along with two chance travelling companions, a professional gambler (Arthur O'Connell) and a saloon girl (Julie London), he tries to get back to civilization. All three land up at the bandit hideout (among the bandits, the tubercular book-lover[1] from *Johnny Guitar*), and we suddenly discover that the Man of the West is none other than the chief's nephew, who used to belong to the gang but gave it all up to lead a more Christian existence under other skies. But the half-crazy old man (Lee J. Cobb) who leads the outlaws believes that his nephew has really come back. Not to disillusion him is, according to our hero, the only way of avoiding disaster for his companions. Unfortunately, a cousin turns up unexpectedly. He proves to be much less credulous than the uncle. This odyssey finally ends in terrible slaughter in a deserted town. Gary Cooper and Julie London escape unharmed. But not being in love with each other (kissing figures no more prominently in *Man of the West* than in *The Tin Star*), they decide to go their own ways as the end-title comes up.

The script is by Reginald Rose, who also wrote *Twelve Angry Men*. So you can see that *Man of the West* belongs, *a priori*, to those 'superWesterns' of which André Bazin spoke. Although if one thinks of *Shane* or *High Noon*, this is likely, still *a priori*, to be a defect. Especially as, after *Men in War* and *The Tin Star*, the art of Anthony Mann seemed to be evolving towards a purely theoretic schematism of *mise en scène*, directly opposed to that of *The Naked Spur, The Far Country, The Last Frontier* or even *The Man from Laramie*. In this respect, seeing *God's Little Acre* was as depressing as it was catastrophic. Yet this unmistakable deterioration, this apparent dryness in the most Virgilian of film-makers . . . if one looks again at *The Man from*

Laramie, The Tin Star and *Man of the West* in sequence, it may perhaps be that this extreme simplification is an endeavour, and the systematically more and more linear dramatic construction is a search: in which case the endeavour and the search would in themselves be, as *Man of the West* now reveals, a step forward. So this last film would in a sense be his *Eléna*, and *The Man from Laramie* his *Carrosse d'or, The Tin Star* his *French-Cancan*.

But a step forward in what direction? Towards a Western style which will remind some of Conrad, others of Simenon, but reminds me of nothing whatsoever, for I have seen nothing so completely new since – why not? – Griffith. Just as the director of *Birth of a Nation* gave one the impression that he was inventing the cinema with every shot, each shot of *Man of the West* gives one the impression that Anthony Mann is reinventing the Western, exactly as Matisse's portraits reinvent the features of Piero della Francesca. It is, moreover, more than an impression. *He does reinvent*. I repeat, reinvent; in other words, he both shows and demonstrates, innovates and copies, criticizes and creates. *Man of the West*, in short, is both course and discourse, or both beautiful landscapes and the explanation of this beauty, both the mystery of firearms and the secret of this mystery, both art and the theory of art . . . of the Western, the most cinematographic genre in the cinema, if I may so put it. The result is that *Man of the West* is quite simply an admirable lesson in cinema – in modern cinema.

For there are perhaps only three kinds of Western, in the sense that Balzac once said there were three kinds of novel: of images, of ideas, and of images and ideas, or Walter Scott, Stendhal, and Balzac himself. As far as the Western is concerned, the first genre is *The Searchers*; the second, *Rancho Notorious*; and the third, *Man of the West*. I do not mean by this that John Ford's film is simply a series of beautiful images. On the contrary. Nor that Fritz Lang's is devoid of plastic or decorative beauty. What I mean is that with Ford it is primarily the images which conjure the ideas, whereas with Lang it is rather the opposite, and with Anthony Mann one moves from idea to image to return – as Eisenstein wanted – to the idea.

Let's take some examples. In *The Searchers*, when John Wayne finds Natalie Wood and suddenly holds her up at arm's length, we pass from stylized gesture to feeling, from John Wayne suddenly petrified to Ulysses being reunited with Telemachus. In *Rancho Notorious*, on the other hand, when Mel Ferrer makes Marlene Dietrich win on the lottery-wheel, the sudden feeling of the intrusion of tragedy in a Far West saloon is not so much reinforced as created by Mel Ferrer's foot tipping the wheel – and with it we pass from the abstract and stylized idea to the gesture. With Ford, an image gives the idea of a shot; with Lang, it is the idea of the shot which gives a beautiful image. And with Anthony Mann?

If one analyses the scene in *Man of the West* where one of the bandits holds his knife to Gary Cooper's throat to force Julie London to strip, one will see that its beauty springs from the fact that it is based at once on a purely theoretical idea and on an extreme realism. With each shot we pass with

Man of the West

Bande à part

fantastic speed from the image of Julie London undressing to the idea of the bandit imagining he will soon see her naked. So Mann need only show the girl in her underwear to give us the impression that we are seeing her naked.

With Anthony Mann, one rediscovers the Western, as one discovers arithmetic in an elementary maths class. Which is to say that *Man of the West* is the most intelligent of films, and at the same time the most simple. What is it about? About a man who *discovers* himself in a dramatic situation; and *looks* about him for a way out. So the *mise en scène* of *Man of the West* will consist – here I almost wanted to write, already consists, for Anthony Mann is beginning to express in form what among his predecessors was usually content, and vice versa – of discovering and defining *at the same time*, whereas in a classical Western the *mise en scène* consisted of discovering and *then* defining. Simply compare the famous pan shot which reveals the arrival of the Indians in *Stagecoach* with the fix-focus shot in *The Last Frontier* of the Indians just appearing out of the high grass to surround Victor Mature and his companions. The force of Ford's camera movement arises from its plastic and dynamic beauty. Mann's shot is, one might say, of *vegetal* beauty. Its force springs precisely from the fact that it owes nothing to any planned aesthetic.

Let us take another example, this time from *Man of the West*. In the

deserted town, Gary Cooper comes out of the little bank and looks to see if the bandit he has just shot is really dead, for he can see him stumbling in the distance at the end of the single street which slopes gently away at his feet. An ordinary director would simply have cut from Gary Cooper coming out to the dying bandit. A more subtle director might have added various details to enrich the scene, but would have adhered to the same principle of dramatic composition. The originality of Anthony Mann is that he is able to enrich while simplifying to the extreme. As he comes out, Gary Cooper is framed in medium shot. He crosses almost the entire field of vision to look at the deserted town, and then (rather than have a reverse angle of the town, followed by a shot of Gary Cooper's face as he watches) a lateral tracking shot re-frames Cooper as he stands motionless, staring at the empty town. The stroke of genius lies in having the track start *after* Gary Cooper moves, because it is this dislocation in time which allows a spatial simultaneity: in one fell swoop we have both the mystery of the deserted town, and Gary Cooper's sense of unease at the mystery. With Anthony Mann, each shot comprises both analysis and synthesis, or as Luc Moullet noted, both the instinctive and the premeditated.

There are other ways of praising *Man of the West*. One could talk about the delightful farm nestling amid the greenery which George Eliot would have loved, or about Lee J. Cobb, with whom Mann succeeds where Richard Brooks failed in *The Brothers Karamazov*. One could also talk about the final gunfight, since this is the first time that the man shooting and the man shot at are both kept constantly in frame at the same time. I spoke earlier of vegetal beauty. In *Man of the West*, Gary Cooper's amorphous face belongs to the mineral kingdom: thus proving that Anthony Mann is returning to the basic truths.

58: *Les Quatre Cents Coups*

With *Les Quatre cents coups*, François Truffaut enters both modern cinema and the classrooms of our childhood. Bernanos's humiliated children.[1] Vitrac's children in power. Melville-Cocteau's *enfants terribles*. Vigo's children, Rossellini's children, in a word, Truffaut's children – a phrase which will become common usage as soon as the film comes out. Soon people will say Truffaut's children as they say Bengal Lancers, spoil-sports, Mafia chiefs, road-hogs, or again in a word, cinema-addicts. In *Les Quatre cents coups*, the director of *Les Mistons* will again have his camera, not up there with the men like Old Man Hawks, but down among the children. If a certain arrogance is implied in talking about 'up there' for the over-thirties, 'down there' should also be taken as implying pride in the under-sixteens: *Les Quatre cents coups* will be the proudest, stubbornest, most obstinate, in other words most free, film in the world. Morally speaking. Aesthetically, too. Henri Decae's Dyaliscope images will dazzle us like those of *Tarnished Angels*. The scenario will be fresh and airy like that of *Juvenile Passion*. The dialogue and gestures as caustic as those in *Baby Face Nelson*. The editing as delicate as that of *The*

Goddess. Precocity will reveal its cloven hoof as in *The Left-handed Gun*. These titles do not spring at random from the keys of my electric typewriter. They come from François Truffaut's list of the ten best films of 1958. A charming and handsome family into which *Les Quatre cents coups* fits beautifully. To sum up, what shall I say? This: *Les Quatre cents coups* will be a film signed Frankness. Rapidity. Art. Novelty. Cinematograph. Originality. Impertinence. Seriousness. Tragedy. Renovation. Ubu-Roi. Fantasy. Ferocity. Affection. Universality. Tenderness.

59: *Le Vent se Lève*

The programme begins with *La Galère engloutie*, in which Commander Cousteau scrapes the bottom of his underwater barrel to offer us a scruffy little documentary which is as far from Flaherty as Loubignac[1] is from Murnau. So 'pass on, pass on, since all must pass'.[2] Everyone will think it ridiculous if I say who this quotation is from because everybody knows it is a poem by Guillaume Apollinaire. And everyone will also instantly place someone who calls his film 'The Wind is rising . . . one must try to live', and then puts the name of Paul Valéry after it in brackets.[3] But we have long known that ridicule never killed Yves Ciampi. Basically, the subject of his new film, as described in the publicity handouts, is as follows: at the age of fifty, men may suddenly discover a loathing for the mediocrity of their lives and dream of some dazzling success. It is understandable that Ciampi, after his big patronizing films and his Japaneseries,[4] should have felt the need to tackle such a subject. *Le Vent se lève* achieves the considerable feat of being insipid *and* grotesque. Should one abuse the film? Hold it in contempt? Commiserate with its maker? Truth to tell, I hardly know where to start in saying what is wrong. The actors? Mylène Demongeot finally puts an end to her career as a star whom every spectator will be delighted to see falling; Curt Jurgens, as always, is a poem in himself. The direction? As empty as a Couzinet, who at least has the advantage of having no complexes. Yves Ciampi, for instance, doesn't even know how to direct an actor in a matt shot in relation to a real décor. Impossible to say more. As M. Teste[5] would say: 'Stupidity is not my strong point.'

60: *Faibles Femmes*

With each succeeding film, one hopes that Boisrond will do better. And this is precisely what he does. But as he started at rock-bottom, today, even with the best will in the world, his weak women[1] are still far from being a funny face. Actually, more than Donen or Tashlin, it is Cukor and *Les Girls* who are being coolly plagiarized by Annette Wademant and Michael Boisrond. Boisrond's direction, as a matter of fact, is of a startling monotony hardly justifiable in view of his (questionable) object of making a comedy out of this sombre story of the murder of a local dandy by three girls. Thus, the best thing about *Faibles femmes* is Jean André's sets. Boisrond, alas, shoots almost every scene in close-ups which make the film look as though it had

been made in a corner of the studio. Alas, too, Annette Wademant's dialogue begins to smell of Roussin.[2] Alas, finally, these weak women and their Prince Charming are portrayed by four zombies.

61: *Le Bel Age*

The good fairy chance has twice leaned on Pierre Kast's shoulder. Firstly, in 1940, arrested by the Germans, he had to postpone his second baccalauréat exam. He read and discovered Raymond Queneau. Secondly, just after the war, happening to meet Henri Langlois – and by the same token, cinema – he began to frequent Murnau, Griffith, Vigo, Stroheim and Eisenstein at the Cinémathèque. Pierre Kast then met Jean Grémillon, and became his assistant. With him, he made a documentary about the conventions of 'Salon' art of the Belle Epoque, *Les Charmes de l'existence*. He then became assistant in turn to Preston Sturges, René Clément and Jean Renoir, while at the same time making a great many short films, including *Les Femmes du Louvre*, *Goya*, *L'Arithmétique* (written and performed by Queneau), *M. Robida explorateur du temps*, *L'Architecte maudit*. In 1957, Pierre Kast made his first feature, *Un Amour de poche*, with the collaboration of France Roche.[1] And with Claude Bernard-Aubert,[2] he has recently set up the Association des cinéastes indépendants (Association of Independent Film-makers).

Jean-Luc Godard: *Le Bel Age* is a project set up entirely independently of the industry?

Pierre Kast: Entirely. The shooting of *Un Amour de poche* was a pretty discouraging experience. Luckily I came across a short story by Moravia, *An Old Fool*. I decided to make a half-hour film based on this story, shot with my own money in districts of Paris which I love. Some producer friends helped me to finish it. Once the final print was ready, I noticed something: which was that as it turned out I had made the film exclusively with old friends. Counting up, I found there were twenty-five of them. So then I thought: why not go on filming my friends and what happens to them? Why not make a feature with and about them, and about myself too? So I made another half-hour film which is a sequel to the first. Other producer friends again helped me with it. Once the final print was ready, I thought: why not go on? I therefore introduced my producer friends of the first film to my producer friends of the second, and they agreed to make the third episode of *Le Bel Age*.

In effect, the subtitle of *Le Bel Age* could well be: Pierre Kast and his friends Boris Vian, Jacques Doniol-Valcroze, Marcello Pagliero, Giani Esposito, etc.[3] I shot the second episode in summer. At the time all my friends were in Saint-Tropez. So I set my cameras up there.

Now I'm off to Switzerland, to le Valais, because that is where the three actresses happen to be whose exploits will shape my third and last episode. That is what interests me, this Pirandellian aspect of reality: the fact that I know a lot of people who have very amusing or very sad adventures, and no one is there to bring 'em back alive. But that, to a large extent, is what the cinema is for.

One thing I dislike about current French film-making is that when you go on the set you are usually assisting at a very mournful operation: you laugh *after* the takes, never *during*, as it were. This is very serious. Because in the days of Sennett and Griffith, when everything was being invented, cinema was created by very jolly people. They had enormous fun. They worked in an atmosphere of wonderful spontaneity. But not today. I think it is this verve and simplicity in film-making we must try to recapture.

Godard: Financially, your system has a great many advantages.

Kast: Yes, it's fantastic. *Le Bel Age* will cost less than twenty-five million francs. But it isn't so much that which is fantastic. What I wanted to prove to French producers was that it is possible to finance a ninety-minute feature simply by tripling the cost of a half-hour short.

Godard: As *Le Bel Age* is the story of a real-life group of friends, will it therefore also be the story of their women?

Kast: Yes, of course. That is just what *Le Bel Age* will be: I mean, my friends and their girls, or my girl-friends and their friends. The important thing is to stick to a personal world in order to gain a relative, if not absolute, freedom. Thus, as I make the film, I am also writing the novel. The even chapters tell the story of the people making the film, the odd ones their story at the moment when they intervene in the film itself. In the last two chapters, both odd and even, you will find the ringmaster – the director, in other words – writing a science-fiction short story which will give point to everything that has gone before, which will in a sense be the parable of *Le Bel Age*.

Godard: In other words, you are running systematically counter to the usual attitudes?

Kast: More or less. Even on the level of production, as I told you. I think so. It's the attitude which is important. At the moment, moreover, we are witnessing an extraordinary phenomenon, unthinkable five years ago even. A whole galaxy of young people are in the process of taking the old Bastille of the French cinema by assault. The same thing is happening in the cinema as happened after the First World War with the Cartel[4] in the theatre, Les Six in music, the School of Paris in painting, the pioneers of airmail in aviation. The young French cinema of today – of Resnais, Franju, Chabrol, Malle, Astruc, Rivette, Bernard-Aubert, Truffaut, Rouch and all the rest of the best – is like the front-wheel-drive when Citroën launched it: it is adventure, sincerity, courage, lucidity. Giraudoux and his gardener[5] will tell you that all this boasts a glorious name, which as it so happens is also that of the greatest film in all cinema: *Sunrise*.

62: *Le Petit Prof'*

Carlo Rim tells us the story of the tribulations of a Frenchman in France.[1] But his film is anything but Chinese and Jules Vernian, for Carlo rhymes these many years with filmic folly. Nevertheless, his *Petit Prof'* is unbounded

in its ambition. It purports to be, all at once, the history of France in this half-century of ours, the pathetic beauty of this history, the critique of this beauty, the drollery of this critique, and a lot more besides. The unfortunate result is that in running after so many hares, Carlo Rim crawls like a tortoise. His shots are cramped, his dialogue invertebrate, his actors barely directed, Darry Cowl badly handled (cf. the films of Norbert Carbonnaux). And moreover, the only intelligent gag (the game with sticky cards) comes straight out of *The Navigator*. *Le Petit Prof'* is, therefore, exactly the sort of film to make you fall asleep on your feet.[2] Alas, I was sitting down.

63: *Asphalte*

The author of this script and dialogue remains unknown. The credits simply state that it is a film by Hervé Bromberger based on an idea by Jacques Sigurd. Actually the idea isn't so bad, being the story of someone who returns to his home town and discovers how everything has changed since the old days. With a theme like this, at once extremely banal and extremely ambitious if, like Chabrol in *Le Beau Serge*, one attempts to emulate Flaubert or André Dhôtel in transforming the banal and metamorphosing melodrama into poetry – with a theme like this, it is necessarily only a step from the best to the worst. A good eye is all one needs. But as Bromberger keeps his in his pocket, you can guess what happens. No, really, there is no longer any excuse for writing lines like 'Ah! the dear old fragrance of Paris, the healthy smell of the Métro', etc. It is true that when Françoise Arnoul says these words, her co-production boy-friend drily answers, 'A very little of that sort of poetry does me.' And audiences will agree. Someone may retort that at least *Asphalte* contains one good shot, of the said Arnoul getting into an aeroplane and saying 'Goodbye!' But personally I said goodbye to this sort of cinema ages ago.

64: *Les Rendez-vous du Diable*

Volcanoes are very simple, says Haroun Tazieff. Six metres away, you feel nothing. At four metres, it's hot. At two metres, you fry. In *Les Rendez-vous du diable*, Tazieff casually approaches within three metres of Lucifer, and equally casually begins filming. This sort of prose, the author of *Rappel à l'ordre*[1] would cry, is poetry. There is something of Monsieur Jourdain[2] in Tazieff, but to the extent that there is something of Molière in Monsieur Jourdain; that is to say, to the extent that Tazieff is a gentleman without knowing it, and creates good cinema also without knowing it, through instinctive nobility. Even if *Les Rendez-vous du diable* contained only the shot in which we see the Manfred-like silhouette of Haroun Tazieff, filmed by his friend Bichet, frantically reloading his Paillard-Bolex so as not to miss anything of the Michelangelo firework-display before him; even if it contained only the shot, again filmed by friend Bichet, in which one sees Tazieff bent beneath a hail of stones like a soldier under fire from a machine-gun; even if it contained only the shot, yet again filmed by the decidedly courageous

and amiable Bichet, in which one sees Tazieff climbing stealthily down Etna's crust of ashes, drawing closer and closer, and still closer to the crater which sleeps with one eye open; even if it contained nothing else, these shots alone would suffice to make *Les Rendez-vous du diable* a remarkable film. For two reasons. One refers to Tazieff himself, the other to the cinema itself.

Let's talk a little about Haroun Tazieff. Personally, I love this great traveller with a passion for volcanoes, just as I loved Valentin, the bird-man who flew off to suicide at the Villacoublay[3] meetings; or Jo Meiffert, the cyclist of death who pedals at 180 behind Grignard's Talbot; or Mermoz and Guillaumet, who hunted furiously over the foothills of the Andes for years looking for the path through to Santiago in Chile. Yes, I love Haroun Tazieff as I love the great captains and the great conquerors, the Westerlings, the Malraux, the Monfrieds, or to put it bluntly, as I love Christopher Columbus when he realized that the Americas were far from the Indies; or, since the posters for *Les Rendez-vous du diable* invite the comparison by subtitling it 'Around the World in 80 Volcanoes', I love Haroun Tazieff as I love Phileas Fogg[4] and his silly, fantastic, delirious bets, describe them how you will, but they are amazing and perfect – two words, as the *Petit Larousse*[5] informs us, which put together mean, very precisely, admirable.

Haroun Tazieff, therefore, is one of these admirable men whose souls, as I have said, are split fifty-fifty between sport and poetry. One ought to have seen *Les Rendez-vous du diable* as one ought to have read *Une Saison en enfer*,[6] but also as one ought to have seen Ascari's Lancia skid on the Monagasque asphalt and plunge into the sea. These men are admirable because, among the pure adventurers, they are the purest. They alone, at least, really put into practice Lenin's famous maxim as codified by Gorky: ethics are the aesthetic of the future. They are artists in an unusual sense of the term, for if they do not know how far they have the right to go too far,[7] they know more: how far it is their duty to go. Right from the outset, that is what gives *Les Rendez-vous du diable* a tone and manner very close to the great Jules Verne novels. Simply that: playing with fire just because it is a deadly game and risking death is better than a sermon by Bossuet, coming within two metres of the flames simply to be there, scorching oneself simply in order to try not to let oneself down. An absurd and fine endeavour inasmuch as it determinedly resists analysis: as absurd and fine as the silence of Rimbaud, absurd and fine as the death of Drieu la Rochelle,[8] absurd and fine as the voyage of Abel,[9] who came on foot from Oslo to Paris to show Cauchy[10] the formula for resolving quintic equations, only Cauchy refused to receive him, and Abel returned to Norway where he spent the rest of his life proving that it was impossible to resolve quintic equations by formula. In fact, the more I think about it, I find I like Haroun Tazieff's film because one can talk about it in absurd ways, thinking about a thousand other pleasing things.

Thus, while gazing with him for the space of a quarter of a second into the huge eyes of a little Indian girl in the Guatemalan bush, or skirting for a

few shots what the airmail pioneers called volcano boulevard, or poring over the calcinated bodies of Pompeii, I was thinking about all this and at the same time about other things – exactly as I found when watching *Voyage to Italy, Bitter Victory*, and other films of the same order of greatness. As I watched Tazieff and Bichet hurriedly build an igloo in order to live more nobly than Yves Ciampi in the rising wind,[11] while they wept from the cold I wept from emotion because I was thinking of Flaherty, and when I think of *Nanook* I think of Murnau, just as when I think of *Tabu* I am reminded of my eskimo, in other words and by the same token of *Stromboli*, and coming back to Flaherty, of Truffaut who hates him but whose first film, according to Rivette after seeing the rough-cut, is curiously reminiscent of Flaherty. And all these thought associations mean that I am moved as I watch the images of Haroun Tazieff's childlike technique unfold on the vast screen of the Normandie. Ah yes, dear readers of *Cahiers*, do not think that we pay no heed to your letters accusing us of sometimes raving wildly about the films we love. This time I choose my words with care in assuring you that *Les Rendez-vous du diable* is a very moving film.

Childlike technique, I said; or if you prefer, spontaneous purity, naïve and barbaric charm, recalling the photographic techniques of the good old days of Félix Mesguisch,[12] and a pleasant change from that of all the *Lost Continents*[13] and other such Walt Dismal efforts. And here we come to the second reason which, as I began by saying, proves that *Les Rendez-vous du diable* is a remarkable film, and which is not this time a human reason connected with the kind of man Haroun Tazieff is, but a cinematographic one pure and simple.

I would say, in fact, that *Les Rendez-vous du diable* is a remarkable film because it is a film. By filming himself risking death from streams of lava, Tazieff proves the cinema – if I may so put it – by the simple fact that without the film, the adventure would be of no interest, since no one but Tazieff would know it had happened in this way. What is remarkable, therefore, is this overweening desire to record, this fierce purpose which Tazieff shares with a Cartier-Bresson or the Sucksdorff of *The Great Adventure*, this deep inner need which forces them to try, against all odds, to authenticate fiction through the reality of the photographic image. Let us now replace the word fiction by fantasy. One then comes back to one of André Bazin's key thoughts in the first chapter of *Qu'est-ce que le cinéma?*, thoughts concerning the 'Ontology of the photographic image', and of which one is constantly reminded in analysing any shot from *Les Rendez-vous du diable*. Haroun Tazieff does not know, but proves that Bazin did know, that 'the camera alone possesses a sesame for this universe where supreme beauty is identified at one and the same time with nature and with chance'.

If Haroun Tazieff merely proved that nature is a great film-maker, his film would be no better than those of Joris Ivens. But the marvellous thing about *Les Rendez-vous du diable* is, on the contrary, that in showing us the underwater eruption of the Azores volcano with its wealth of forms so awe-

some that only Tintoretto could have dared paint it; in showing us a river of lava writhing in a boiling mass of purple and gold, colours which only Eisenstein dared use in the banquet scene of *Ivan the Terrible*; in showing all these prodigies of *mise en scène*, Haroun Tazieff proves, *ipso facto*, that *mise en scène* is a prodigious thing.

65: *La Loi*

Jules Dassin wasn't at all bad when he was shooting semi-documentary style among the Italian fruit-workers of San Francisco, in the old wooden subway of New York, or on the dreamy docks of that charming city which, as Sacha Guitry said, the English insist on calling London.[1] But one day, alas, our Jules began to take himself seriously and came to France with a martyr's passport. At the time, *Rififi* fooled some people. Today it can't hold a candle to *Touchez pas au Grisbi*,[2] which paved the way for it, let alone *Bob le flambeur*,[3] which it paved the way for. The rest is an old, old story. If Billy Graham were a film-maker, he would doubtless be called Jules Dassin. Letting our apprentice philosopher preach from European studios is rather like letting a fairground strong-man think he is capable of explaining Aristotle. After *Celui qui doit mourir* and its attempt to prove his position by aqua-fortis engraving, comes *La Loi* and engraving in rose-water. Whatever Vailland's novel may be worth, what Dassin and Françoise Giroud have done to it isn't worth much. A few scenes of singing and dancing point to the direction it should have taken – a sort of modern Harlequin and Columbine. Once again, alas, our Jules, believing himself to be Hercules, took himself seriously and plunged on the contrary into melina-melodrama. The result, of course, is not one good shot in two hours of film. Mastroianni hams horribly. Pierre Brasseur is half asleep, and Montand[4] I have seen better. And Gina? One must suppose that she was the only actress capable of playing a fourteen-year-old girl, since Dassin tested all the young stars from Pascale Petit to Mireille Granelli, by way of Mylène Demongeot, Mijanou Bardot, Pascale Audret and all the rest, before taking her on. By chance, I happened to see two of these tests. The clapper-board announced: Miss So-and-So. One saw the girl entering at the rear of the set and coming forward to kiss a man waiting in the foreground. The kiss lasted several seconds. The man then turned toward the camera with the air of an itinerant carpet-seller and said 'Cut!' It was Jules Dassin.

66: *La Ligne de Mire*

Jean-Daniel Pollet is the director of an excellent short called *Pourvu qu'on ait l'ivresse*[1] which was a prizewinner at Venice last year and is currently being shown as support to a film (?) by Jean Boyer, *Les Vignes du Seigneur*. A reportage on loneliness as well as a poetic essay on suburban dance-halls, *Pourvu qu'on ait l'ivresse* revealed a film-maker able to feel for what he filmed the same tenderness as Raymond Queneau shows towards his friend Pierrot,[2] but also the same ferocity as Jean Vigo apropos of Nice.[3]

When Orson Welles made *Citizen Kane* he was twenty-five years old. Since then, young film-makers the world over have dreamed of nothing but making their first big film before reaching that age. Jean-Daniel Pollet will be the first to realize this dream. At twenty-three years of age, he is both the scriptwriter and director of *La Ligne de Mire*.

As he is also the producer, *La Ligne de Mire* is, of all the films made this year, the one which snaps its fingers most freely at the conventions which hold sway in that very medieval corporation, the French cinema. This important film will, therefore, be cropping up again for more reasons than one. Meanwhile, let me say this.

Trapped by actuality, and switching from gun-running to hunting-parties, the characters in *La Ligne de Mire* are obviously in search of an author, like Pirandello's six. Why? Quite simply because Pollet allows his actors complete freedom. Taking advantage of a carefully worked out scenario, he allows them in effect to improvise their scenes almost entirely. Again, why? Quite simply, once again, to upset Diderot's theory[4] and turn the paradox of the actor into the more cinematographic, and therefore more moving, one of the character. For faced by this world large or small vibrating before him, Pollet is content to be, at the viewfinder, on the lookout for poetry.

67: *Les Cousins*

The story which Claude Chabrol tells in his second film, *Les Cousins*, is of beautiful simplicity, or if you prefer, simple beauty. At first sight it is a story after Balzac, for in it one sees the Rastignac of *Père Goriot* taking up his abode with the Rubempré of *Une Etude de Femme*. But *Les Cousins* is also a fable by La Fontaine, since one sees a town rat (Jean-Claude Brialy) lording it over his country cousin (Gérard Blain) while a grasshopper (Juliette Mayniel) flits from one to the other with a very Parisian disdain. *Les Cousins*, in short, is the story of a match between laughing Johnny and crying Johnny. And Chabrol's originality is that he has let laughing Johnny win in spite of his wicked airs.

For the first time in a very long time, in fact, perhaps since *La Règle du Jeu*, we can watch a French film-maker taking his characters to their logical conclusion; and making of their development the Ariadne's thread of his scenario. In *Le Beau Serge*, this was already one of the film's principal features. But it is even more noticeable in *Les Cousins*. One is interested by the characters not so much because they study hard, sleep with the 'good-time girls'[1] or go on the spree; no, one is interested in them because their exploits reveal them at each instant under a new light. This is the important thing: that Chabrol has been able to pass with masterly skill from the theoretical beauty of a script by Paul Gégauff to its practical beauty – in other words, its *mise en scène*. It is important because it is very difficult. Antonioni, for instance, wasn't able to make it in *Il Grido*.

Between *Le Beau Serge* and *Les Cousins* there is the same difference as between a Cameflex and a Super Parvo. Almost constantly in pursuit of the

characters, Chabrol's big studio camera hunts the actors down, with both cruelty and tenderness, in all four corners of Bernard Evein's[2] astonishing décor. Like some great beast it suspends an invisible menace over Juliette Mayniel's pretty head, forces Jean-Claude Brialy to unmask the great game, or imprisons Gérard Blain under double key[3] with a fantastic circular movement of the camera. When I say that Chabrol gives me the impression of having invented the pan – as Alain Resnais invented the track, Griffith the close-up, and Ophuls reframing – I can speak no greater praise.

68: *Moi, un Noir*

André Bazin once said that the greatest film in the world was the Kon-Tiki Expedition, but that the film did not exist and would never be made simply because it wasn't. While we await Roberto Rossellini's *India 58*, which shows how and why such a film is nevertheless possible, here is Jean Rouch's second feature *Moi, un Noir*, formerly *Treichville*, which points up quite a few of the idiocies of current film production.

Moi, un Noir is, in effect, both the most daring of films and the humblest. It may look like a scarecrow but its logic is foolproof, because it is the film of a free man in the same way as Chaplin's *A King in New York*. *Moi, un Noir* is a free Frenchman freely taking a free look at a free world. It is, therefore, a film which is certainly not produced by Raoul Lévy.[1] The director of the admirable *Jaguar* does not track down truth because it is scandalous but because it is amusing, tragic, graceful, eccentric, what you will. The important thing is that truth is there. One must seize it on the wing when Mademoiselle Dorothy Lamour (a little whore who would delight Norbert Carbonnaux) gambols tenderly in the lagoon at Abidjan. One must take it at its word when it comes from the mouth of Lemmy Caution, American federal agent and unemployed of Treichville, as he waits for girls at the church door, or tells Petit Jules why France lost the match in Indo-China in a speech which is part-Céline, part-Audiberti,[2] part nothing at all ultimately, because the conversation of Rouch and his characters (whose resemblance to persons living or dead is absolutely not coincidental) is as new and as pure as Botticelli's Venus, as the black rising from the waves in *Les Statues meurent aussi*.[3]

New cinema, says the poster for the film. And it is right. *Moi, un Noir* is less perfect as cinema than many other current films; even so, in its aim it makes all of them not only useless but almost odious. Jean Rouch, moreover, is constantly moving forward. He now sees that reportage derives its nobility from being a sort of quest for a Holy Grail called *mise en scène*. Accordingly there are in *Moi, un Noir* a few crane shots worthy of Anthony Mann. But the wonderful thing is that they are done by hand. To sum up: in calling his film *Moi, un Noir*, Jean Rouch, who is white like Rimbaud, like him is saying *I is another*. His film, consequently, offers the open sesame to poetry.

69: *La Tête contre les Murs*

In all of Franju's documentaries, even the least successful of them, a flash of

madness suddenly rips the screen and forces the spectator to look at reality in another light. In *La Tête contre les murs*, the first feature by the director of *La Première nuit*[1] (which completes the programme), this flash, this poetic illumination, has become the theme of the film. The thunderbolt explodes in the very first shot as a motor-cyclist plunges down a gully, watched by Anouk Aimée's Novalis brown eyes, then zigzags shot by shot from a girl swimming in the dark water to a colourful billiard-saloon in the Place Clichy, and ends in a romantic track along the walls of the Amiens psychiatric asylum, photographed by Schuftan as only Rudolph Maté was able to photograph Dreyer's *Vampyr*.

The story is as simple as it is good. From Hervé Bazin's dense and complicated novel, the scriptwriters (Jean-Pierre Mocky and Jean-Charles Pichon) have managed to extract a remarkably logical scenario. It is in three parts. First, reality: Géranne and his girl, the party on a barge, Géranne stealing money from his father and burning his papers. Then madness: Géranne in confinement, doors without handles, plump pigeons in an aviary, a fight with a saw, a beautiful madwoman singing Mass, another hiding behind huge bushes, strange doctors, a hanging, a little electric train. Then reality again: Géranne escapes and returns to Paris.

And this is where we discover the secret of Franju's art. This second reality is no longer the same as the first. *I* is now *another*.[2] The cards are so well shuffled that it is the first reality which takes on the colour of madness. By showing us his hero Géranne as a normal person, he convinces us more and more that he is really mad. Or vice versa. Roger Grenier's magnificent book, *Le Rôle d'accusé*, is impossible to adapt to the screen; but the adaptation now exists, and it is called *La Tête contre les murs*.

For it is here that Franju's power and talents lie. He seeks the bizarre[3] at all costs, because the bizarre is a convention and behind this convention one must, also at all costs, discover a basic truth. He seeks the madness behind reality because it is for him the only way to rediscover the true face of reality behind this madness. This is why with each close-up one has the feeling that the camera wipes these faces, as Veronica's handkerchief wiped the face of Our Lord, because Franju seeks and finds classicism behind romanticism. In more modern terms, let us say that Franju demonstrates the necessity of Surrealism if one considers it as a pilgrimage to the sources. And *La Tête contre les murs* proves that he is right.

70: *Les Motards*

This third film by the comic tandem, Roger Pierre and Jean-Marc Thibault, *Les Motards*, reveals a certain advance on the first two. In the second reel there is a very nicely filmed sequence between our two crazy men and the adorable Véronique Zuber. Afterwards everything goes wrong, and if the good humour and air of anything goes make it a hundred times better than anything of Carlo Rim's, it is still a hundred times less good than Carbonnaux. One might say it's Rigadin[1] rather than Max Linder. Roger Pierre and

Jean-Marc Thibault ought to engage a director capable of developing their numerous ideas. For instance, the gag with the two motor-cycles on the parapet of a little country bridge needs a Buster Keaton to bring out its geometric quality. But even so the film remains agreeable, and Véronique Zuber, I repeat, is most agreeable.

71: *Le Grand Chef*

You know the story. Gangsters kidnap a millionaire's son. But the kid is so insufferable that he makes life impossible for his kidnappers. O. Henry wrote a delightful story on the theme which Howard Hawks filmed with his usual talent. Brilliantly, that is. It was one of the sketches in *Full House*. Had Fox not cut it when the film was shown in France, Henri Verneuil and Troyat could have seen it, and maybe they would have had some misgivings about their task. In which case we spectators would not now have occasion to see *Le Grand chef*, which is the deadliest film of the year. Worth mention is the horrible little Papouf, by comparison with whom Fernandel is a model of restraint.

72: Africa Speaks of the End and the Means

Our readers already know, by way of extracts from the commentary published in our issue No. 90, that with *Moi, un Noir* (formerly *Treichville*) Jean Rouch has added the third panel to his vast Nigerian triptych. The other two were *Jaguar* (actually Rouch's first full-length film, as yet not shown publicly) and *Les Fils de l'eau*, which comprised a series of ethnological shorts from *La Circoncision* to *Les Maîtres fous*.

Just as *Les Cousins* is the opposite of *Le Beau Serge*, in *Moi, un Noir* Jean Rouch tells a story which is the reverse of *Jaguar*. Like a news reporter filming Jayne Mansfield's arrival in Paris from Los Angeles or François Mitterand leaving the Elysée Palace, Rouch films the misadventures of a little band of Nigerians, ingenuously come to seek their fortune in the beautiful city of Abidjan. 'O! Abidjan of the lagoons', tenderly runs the song. All these lay-abouts-in-spite-of-themselves live in Treichville, a native quarter which rose up out of the ground within the space of a few months, looking rather like one of those Western towns, and which they refer to with joking contempt as 'The African Chicago'. Hardly surprising, therefore, that the characters of *Moi, un Noir* should call themselves Edward G. Robinson, Eddie Constantine-Lemmy Caution, or Tarzan. Not to mention Elite, P'tit Jules and Dorothy Lamour.

Rouch's originality lies in having made characters out of his actors – who are actors in the simplest sense of the term, moreover, being filmed *in action*, while Rouch contents himself with filming this action after having, as far as possible, organized it logically in the manner of Rossellini. Exactly, the captious will say: how possible is this possible? We shall see.

For instance, one of the actors, Edward G. Robinson, is the son of a man of substance in Niamey. He is 'educated', having passed both parts of the

baccalauréat, and might have followed in the footsteps of Houphouet Boigny.[1] But it so happened that one day he was sent to Indo-China. When he returned, he was disowned by his family because, his father said, in the old days one came back dead when one lost a war. It is at this point that the credits of *Moi, un Noir* start. Rouch begins to follow his former 'para'[2] – tracking in on hopeful days, tracking out on bitter ones – in his search for girls, in his search for money, in his search. A modern Balthazar Claes, Jean Rouch has not usurped the title printed on his visiting-card: 'Research Assistant to the Museum of Man.'[3] Is there a better definition of the film-maker?

No Half-Measures

Consider Malraux, at the time when he was roaming the Kuomintang. The result was an admirable novel, *Les Conquérants*. But had not the Prussian blue of Garine's eyes during his long conversations with Borodine[4] been set down on Gallimard paper, would they not have been even more beautiful filmed in 16 mm Kodachrome and then blown up in Eastman Color? Malraux, moreover, is aware of this, since he filmed *L'Espoir* before writing it.

For, after all, there are no half-measures. Either it is reality or it is fiction. Either one stages something or one does reportage. Either one opts completely for art or for chance. For construction or for actuality. Why is this so? Because in choosing one, you automatically come round to the other.

To be more precise. You make *Alexander Nevsky* or *India 58*. You have an aesthetic obligation to film one, a moral obligation to film the other. But you have no right to film, say, *Nanook of the North*, as though you were filming *Sunrise*. It so happens that *L'Espoir* is a good film, but would it not have been even better had someone like Haroun Tazieff, or like Arthur Penn, been the artistic adviser instead of Denis Marion?[5] What I mean is this: Malraux's error lay in not committing himself fully to one direction or the other. For instance: in the scene where the Mercedes tears down an alley in Valladolid to crash into an anti-tank gun, the editing is aesthetically jarring if one compares it to the machine-guns spitting out one bullet per shot in *October*. Similarly, though for the opposite reason, the *Paisa*-style shots are morally jarring by comparison with the journey through Florence in Rossellini's film, or with the execution of Mao Tse-tung's snipers by a bullet in the back of the head in a newsreel about Peking. In other words, his *mise en scène* yields *a priori* to actuality, and his actuality yields to *mise en scène*. I repeat, *a priori*. For it is here that one feels a certain awkwardness, as one never does with Flaherty, but which one finds in *Lost Continent*.[6]

Once again let us dot a few i's. All great fiction films tend towards documentary, just as all great documentaries tend towards fiction. *Ivan the Terrible* tends towards *Que Viva Mexico!*, and vice versa; *Mr Arkadin* towards *It's All True*, and conversely. One must choose between ethic and aesthetic. That is understood. But it is no less understood that each word implies a part of the other. And he who opts wholeheartedly for one, necessarily finds the other at the end of his journey. *Lola Montès* is the opposite of *Jaguar*, but they support and vindicate each other because they are pure films, films by free men. In the same way one could also say that there is no more moral film than *Birth of a Nation*, and no more spectacular film than *Moi, un Noir*. So everything now happens as though Nietzsche's famous dictum, 'We have art so as not to die from the truth', were completely and utterly false.

Art or Chance

In so far as the cinema is concerned at least, as *Moi, un Noir* demonstrates. For it contains the answer, the answer to the great question: can art be consonant with chance? Yes, Rouch shows, more and more clearly (or getting better and better). For example: Edward, become Edgar Robinson, imagines himself training for the world boxing championship. The gymnasium is as dark as a tunnel. Rouch shoots the scene without lighting, not even a floodlight. Too bad if you see nothing with everything coloured. And, in fact, for a few minutes one sees nothing. Then the miracle happens: a black face gradually becomes visible against – and this is the miracle – a black background. Reveals itself, I should have said, for this shot is as mysterious and beautiful as the one in *Funny Face* in which Audrey Hepburn's portraits are developed. Here Jean Rouch, the ethnologist, rejoins Richard Avedon, the artistic fashion photographer. Art or chance? At any rate it proves that all roads lead to *Rome, Open City*. If the ways of art are mysterious, it is because those of chance are not. Perhaps 'because everything is God', the last shot of this astonishing film tells us.

Cinema Nuovo

All is now clear. To trust to chance is to *hear voices*. Like Jeanne d'Arc of old, our friend Jean set out with a camera to save, if not France, French cinema at least. A door open on a new cinema, says the poster for *Moi, un Noir*. How right it is. Rouch is as important as Stanislavsky for, simply because the cinema exists, he already has as his point of departure what the Russian producer sought as a goal. More important than Pirandello, too, being *spontaneously* ambitious and not spontaneous by calculation like the Visconti of *La Terra Trema*.

Of course *Moi, un Noir* is still far from rivalling *India 58*. There is a jokey side to Rouch which sometimes undermines his purpose. Not that the inhabitants of Treichville haven't the right to poke fun at everything, but there is a certain facility about his acceptance of it. A joker can get to the bottom of things as well as another, but this should not prevent him from self-discipline. This is the sort of criticism that may be levelled against Rouch, but no other. He knows it, moreover. He knows that his full-length films are beginning to have little in common with those little ethnological reportages. He knows that in emerging from his artisan's chrysalis he has become an artist.

I love the moment in *Fallen Angel* when the camera, in order not to lose sight of Linda Darnell as she walks across a restaurant, rushes so fast through

Bande à part: Anna Karina and Sami Frey

the customers that one sees the assistants' hands seizing two or three of them by the scruff of the neck and pulling them aside to make way for it. And when Eddie Constantine, American federal agent, is arguing with P'tit Jules in a staggering flow of words along the lines of *Bagatelles pour un massacre*,[7] and Rouch, kneeling beside them with the camera on his shoulder, suddenly straightens up slowly and lifts *à la* Anthony Mann, his knees serving as the crane, to frame Abidjan, O! Abidjan of the lagoons, on the other side of the river, I love it. I love the aquatic movement of Preminger's camera because it gives me an impression of actuality, and because I feel that, for him, it is his way of getting to the heart of things. And I love Rouch's effects because they defend the same cause – or rather, I defend his cause because it achieves the same results.

Whatever else might be said about this film, Rouch doesn't give a damn anyway. He never listens. He did not come to Paris to collect his Delluc Prize. He has plunged deeper than ever into the heart of Africa, and is at present busily filming the odyssey of some Tartarins of the bush and their lion-hunt.[8]

73: *A Time to Love and a Time to Die*

I love ostriches. They are realists. They believe only what they see. When everything is going wrong and the world gets too ugly, they need only close

Hearts of the World: Lillian Gish and Noel Coward

their eyes very firmly to blot out the exterior world as purely and simply as the little laundress[1] blotted out the prince in Renoir's ballad. Ostriches, in other words, are completely idiotic and completely charming beasts. And the reason I like *Le Diable au corps* is because it tells the story of two ostriches. And the reason I also like *A Time to Love and a Time to Die* is, of course, because it resembles not Autant-Lara's miserable film[2] but the droll Raymond Radiguet's novel. And after all, why do I like Raymond Radiguet so much anyway? Simply because he did not know he was short-sighted and thought that everybody saw things as hazily as he did until the day Cocteau gave him a pair of spectacles.

So you can see that I am going to write a madly enthusiastic review of Douglas Sirk's latest film, simply because it set my cheeks afire. And enthusiastic I shall be. In the first place I shall refer constantly to everything Radiguet's novel makes me think of, to Griffith's *True-Heart Susie*, because I think one should mention Griffith in all articles about the cinema: everyone agrees, but everyone forgets none the less. Griffith, therefore, and André Bazin too, for the same reasons; and now that is done, I can get back to my comparisons for *A Time to Love and a Time to Die*. But here I pause for a moment to say that, next to *Le Plaisir*, this is the greatest title in all cinema, sound or silent, and also to say that I heartily congratulate Universal-

Le Petit Soldat: Michel Subor and Anna Karina

International on having changed the title of Erich Maria Remarque's novel, which was called *A Time to Live and a Time to Die*. In so doing, those dear old universal and international bandits have in effect set Douglas down in a circus[3] which Boris Barnet would have been prodigiously happy to film, because it is ten times more battle-scarred and beautiful than Brooks's: in other words, by replacing the word 'live' by 'love', they implicitly posed their director the question – an admirable starting-point for the script – 'Should one live to love, or love to live?' And now, having finished my detour and comparisons: a time to love and a time to die – no, I shall never tire of writing these new, still imperturbably new, words. *A Time to Love and a Time to Die*: you know very well that I am going to talk about this film as I do about friend Fritz or Nicholas Ray, about *You Only Live Once* or *They Live by Night*, as though, in other words, John Gavin and Liselotte Pulver were Aucassin and Nicolette 1959.

This, anyhow, is what enchants me about Sirk: this delirious mixture of medieval and modern, sentimentality and subtlety, tame compositions and frenzied CinemaScope. Obviously one must talk about all this as Aragon talks about Elsa's eyes,[4] raving a little, a lot, passionately, no matter, the only logic which concerns Sirk is delirium. So, back to our ostriches. On one occasion last year I remember seeing a remarkable little film set by the sea. A

A Time to Love and a Time to Die: Liselotte Pulver and John Gavin

girl, really not bad at all, was playing hide-and-seek through the trees with a man. Finally, he caught her and kissed her. She was quite willing, but seemed neither happy nor content. Why? he asked her. The girl stretched out on the warm sand and closed her eyes. Because, she said, I would like to be able to close my eyes very tight, very, very tight, so that everything would go completely black, really black, everything, but I never can.

This blackness is Douglas Sirk's theme in *A Time to Love and a Time to Die*. I find the film remarkable because it gives me the feeling that Ernest and his Lisbeth, this couple with the smooth Premingerian faces, by closing their eyes with passionate simplicity in Berlin under the bombs, ultimately delve deeper into themselves than any other character in a film to date. As Rossellini[5] says, it is thanks to the war that they find love. They become, thanks to Hitler, man and woman as God created them. It is because one must love to live that one must live to love, says Ernest in killing a Russian partisan, or Lisbeth while delicately sipping her champagne. Love at leisure, says Sirk approvingly with every shot in homage to Baudelaire, love then and die. And his film is beautiful because one thinks of the war as one watches these images of love, and vice versa.

A very simplistic idea, you may say. Perhaps, after all, it is a producer's idea. But it needed a film-maker to bring it safely to port, and to discover the truth of pleasure behind the convention of tears. This is precisely what Lewis Milestone was once unable to do, and what Philip Dunne has just made a pitiful mess of.[6] But unlike that schoolmaster from Fox, Douglas Sirk is an honest film-maker, in the classic sense of the adjective. His genuine simplicity is his strength. Technically speaking, this is also why I find the film remarkable. Because I get the feeling that the images last twice as long as in most films, a twenty-fourth of a second instead of a forty-eighth, as if this ex-editor from UFA,[7] through fidelity to his characters, had tried to bring into play even the lapse of time during which the shutter is closed. Of course, Sirk has not gone about it as explicitly as that. But he gives the impression of having had the idea. And though it may be an ingenuous idea on the part of a director to attempt to assimilate the definition of cinema itself to that of his heroes, it is a good one. Basically, when one says 'gets under the skin of his characters', this is exactly what one means. Taken all in all, it is as artless and as wonderful as Gance, who threw cameras in the air when young Napoleon was throwing snowballs in the courtyard at Brienne.[8]

The important thing, as Douglas Sirk demonstrates, is to believe in what one is doing in order to make it believable. In this respect, *A Time to Love and a Time to Die* goes one better than *Tarnished Angels*, *Written on the Wind* or *Captain Lightfoot*. They are not great films, but no matter: they are beautiful. But why are they? In the first place, as we have seen, because the scenario is good. Next, because the actors are far from bad. And finally, because the direction is ditto. *A Time to Die* proves this once again.

Before talking of form, let us speak of Liselotte Pulver's. Everyone scorns it. But I like it. You think she's skinny; but after all it is wartime, and the subject

of the film is not 'Off with your pullover, Lise!'[9] For my part I have never found a German girl in the crumbling Third Reich so credible as I did in watching this young Swiss start nervously at each camera movement. I will go further. I have never found wartime Germany so credible as in watching this American film made in peacetime. Even more than Aldrich in *Attack*, Sirk can make things seem so close that we can touch them, that we can smell them. The face of a corpse frozen in the rime on the Russian front, bottles of wine, a brand-new apartment in a ruined city: one believes in them as though they had been filmed by a newsreel Cameflex instead of with a huge CinemaScope apparatus controlled by what one must call the hand of a master.

It is fashionable today to say that the wide screen is all window-dressing. Personally, my answer to all those René's who can't see clearly[10] is a polite 'My eye!' One need only have seen the last two Sirk films to be finally convinced that CinemaScope adds as much again to the normal format. One should add here that our old film-maker has regained his young legs and beats the young at their own game, panning happily all round, tracking back or forwards likewise. And the astonishingly beautiful thing about these camera movements, which tear away like racing-cars and where the blurring is masked by the speed with which they are executed,* is that they give the impression of having been done by hand instead of with a crane, rather as if the mercurial brushwork of a Fragonard were the work of a complex machine. Conclusion: those who have not seen or loved Liselotte Pulver running along the bank of the Rhine or Danube or something, suddenly bending to pass under a barrier, then straightening up *hop!* with a thrust of the haunches – those who have not seen Douglas Sirk's big Mitchell camera bend at the same moment, then *hop!* straighten up with the same supple movement of the thighs, well, they haven't seen anything, or else they don't know beauty when they see it.

74: Boris Barnet

Two years ago, only some twenty people were there to roar with laughter through the screening of Boris Barnet's *By the Bluest of Seas*. Today progress has been made. With *The Wrestler and the Clown*, which Barnet made in 1957, the Cinémathèque was able to put up house-full notices as sternly as for any Pabst or Feyder. One even noticed the presence of Ado Kyrou[1] in the front seats, and at the back a party from *Cinéma 59*,[2] which is presumably obliged to take an interest in all things new this year. But there is more progress still to be made. Everybody, in fact, except your humble servant and his friend Rivette, gave a pretty grim welcome to this exceedingly agreeable Sovcolor comic opera. One doesn't have to be stupid to dislike Barnet's film, but one does have to have a heart of stone.

The Wrestler and the Clown is, admittedly, a commercial vehicle, and friend Boris is too well styled a director to refuse something that might be saved by a

* When the camera pans, the background inevitably becomes blurred. To cover this blur, Sirk's idea is always to have people running in front of and behind the people he is following, to cancel the defects of speed by going even more quickly.

little style. But this is the perfect occasion to seek the secret of this art of stylization thanks to which *Generous Summer* is not unworthy of *Design for Living*, *The Scout's Exploit* of *Saboteur*, *The Girl with the Hat-box* of *The New York Hat*, and *The Wrestler and the Clown* of *Slightly Scarlet*. It is in Boris Barnet, rather than Allan Dwan or Raoul Walsh, that one must look today for the famous Triangle style.

It is there in his close-ups of daring young girls on the flying trapeze, fluttering their eyelids to match the slightest heart-beat. It is there in his long shots laid out as regularly as a garden by Le Nôtre.[3] It is there in his rare camera movements, in which grace vies spontaneously with precision. It is there in his genius for narrative, which makes born story-tellers out of those who employ it. It is there, thanks to Boris Barnet, that inimitable style which will die only with the cinema. Meanwhile, long live *The Wrestler and the Clown*.

75: A Film-Maker is also a Missionary: Roberto Rossellini

Among all the great directors, Roberto Rossellini is at once the most admired and the most attacked. The world-wide plaudits which greeted *Rome, Open City* became rarer and rarer as *Germany Year Zero*, *Europa 51* and *Stromboli* reached our screens and *La Macchina Ammazzacattivi* and *Dov'è la libertà* did not reach them.

Whereas *Paisa*, not so very long ago, was the rage of the Cannes Festival, *Fear* came out last year in a seedy second-run cinema. But like Socrates (whose death was one of his film projects) and St Francis of Assisi (whose life he filmed),[1] Roberto Rossellini, abandoned by almost everyone, forged full steam ahead through the narrow gates of his art, no longer listening to anyone. Humility and logic were the only two beacons illuminating his voyage to the end of the cinematographic night, a voyage which led him to the fount of Indo-European civilization. Today, Roberto Rossellini has re-emerged with *India 58*, a film as great as *Que Viva Mexico!* or *Birth of a Nation* and which shows that this season in hell led to paradise, for *India 58* is as beautiful as the creation of the world.

Rossellini: 'India is five hundred million people. More than a quarter of the human race. It's a tidy number, I think. In my opinion, therefore, one should know India, or the Indies if you prefer. That is why I have made not only a film, but also several reportages intended as television documentaries. Today, nations are packed close together like sardines. People travel more and more frequently. It has even become a commonplace. Family life, in other words, has opened out on to a world scale. Consequently, the most important thing is to know one's neighbour. Because before loving him, one must get to know him. I am accused of making films as a sniper. But this is precisely why. I am going out on reconnaissance. A missionary is first and foremost an explorer; therefore a film-maker.

'Before all else, one must know men as they are. And that is what the

cinema is for, to film them in all latitudes, in all their adventures, and from every angle, good or bad. It is not for nothing that the camera lens can also be called an objective. One must try to approach men with objectivity and respect. One has no right to film an unpleasant person while having at the same time the intention of condemning him. I never permit myself to judge my characters. I simply show what they do and say. It was Balzac, I think, who often used to say at the beginning of the final chapters of his novels, "And now the facts speak for themselves". And this is precisely what getting to the heart of things means. One must get to this extreme point where things speak for themselves. Which does not mean that they alone speak, but that they speak of what they really are. When you show a tree, it must speak to you of its beauty as a tree, a house of its beauty as a house, a river of its beauty as a river. Men and animals too. A tiger, an elephant, a monkey, is as interesting as a gangster or a society lady. And vice versa.

'The danger today is that the wrong questions are being asked. Thousands of problems are being resolved. But alas, they are false problems from the outset. And why are they false problems? Because we vie with each other in waving a flag of silly optimism. Everything is going great, and in the end one realizes that it's not going at all. Whereas the contrary should be true. Elephants, tigers and cobras are never optimistic or pessimistic. It's the same with men. To get to know them, I had to get as close as possible to this state of things. I went to India because I thought I might find it there. I could have gone to Brazil, Siberia or the Côte d'Azur, or stayed in Rome. But I wanted to go to India. After all it is the cradle of us all.

'One day, in an utterly remote village near the Tibetan border, I met an old peasant. For hours I had been trying to make myself understood to the villagers, who spoke an incomprehensible dialect. Even gestures were no use. Then the old man happened by and heard me speaking Italian. Immediately he translated everything I was saying. He understood me perfectly, and I too understood everything he said. Simply because he knew Latin. I find that wonderful. This man had never left his village tucked away in the bush. But he knew Latin. No one had taught it him, but he knew it, almost by instinct one might say.

'Now, it is instinct that interests me. If this is what critics call neo-realism, then I am in agreement. And in all my films I have tried to draw closer to instinct. Do you remember the doctor in *Fear* who treats his wife like the guinea-pigs he uses for his experiments? For in the final analysis intelligence, too, is a convention; and behind the intelligence I seek to show not only how it works but why it works in this way. I would like to show the animal side of intelligence, just as in *India 58* I showed the intelligence in animal behaviour. I never calculate. I know what I want to say, and I look for the most direct way of saying it. There's no point in racking your brains. All you need is to be logical. All you need is clear ideas. The image follows automatically. Broadly speaking, in my television programmes I show that "I have had a good trip." And in *India 58*, I show why the trip was good.

'One must judge on intentions. I love and admire, for instance, a film by Jean Rouch called *Jaguar*. But in the same way I also love and admire Max Ophuls's *Lola Montès* or Joshua Logan's *Bus Stop*. It is the end which counts and not the means employed. With *India 58* I wanted – how can I put it exactly? – to give the feeling of a world. I would like the spectator to come away with this feeling after seeing it. And it will be up to him to judge if it is important, if it was urgent or not that it be shown. Audiences must come away with the same feeling as I had in India. In other words, they must discover that a world is there, before their eyes, it exists, and this world is theirs, it is ours.

'The Indies are very different from what I imagined when I saw them only from Europe. But when I arrived, I realized that India was a legend, a few popular conceptions. I had, therefore, to discover the reality, the truth, behind the popular conceptions. It is not a matter of suppressing these conceptions. They exist. They are fact. One must merely look underneath, see on what they are based. Yogas, for instance. I realized that Yogas are a European invention. In Paris and New York today there are Yoga clubs frequented by all sorts of people, businessmen, society women, bakers, secretaries, etc. They earnestly believe that by indulging certain contortions once a week under the supervision of a teacher they will achieve the famous Hindu wisdom. But in India nothing like that exists. I travelled hundreds of thousands of kilometres and I never saw a single Yoga. And snake-charmers? I saw two. They too are a European invention. You can see them in any fair, but not in India.

'Then, in the end, it was because India was so different from what I had expected that I realized this world was still my own. It is extraordinary how many falsehoods circulate today, in the cinema more than anywhere. But falsehood presupposes truth. And when I got to India I understood. Masks are very nice and I am in favour of them; but I am in favour of them in so far as they must be removed. It's like the sailors from the *Potemkin* who are about to shoot their mutinous comrades. It is because their heads are covered by a tarpaulin that they realize these men are their brothers. For me, India was like Eisenstein's tarpaulin. It's like the solution of a problem. You look for days and days without finding it. Then, suddenly, the solution is there, staring you in the face. *India 58* is like a word that has been on the tip of my tongue for years. The word is *Paisa*, *Europa 51* or *Fear*, and today it is called *India 58*.'

76: *Une Simple Histoire*

One should see this film for several reasons. In the first place because it was shot in 16 mm, and a full-length 'amateur' film is interesting *a priori*. Why *a priori*? Because, as the author of *Les Enfants terribles* says, 16 mm may be the sole weapon of the future[1] for poets against 'gigantescorama', the daily bread of producers. Secondly, one should see Marcel Hanoun's film because, along with Rossellini's work, and pending Renoir's *Le Docteur Cordelier*, it is the best television programme offered by R.T.F.

Marcel Hanoun is visibly influenced by Robert Bresson. And *Une Simple Histoire* resembles *Un Condamné à mort* a good deal because it is the story of a woman condemned to live. We see her arriving in Paris from the provinces in search of work. She trails from place to place with her little girl, and finds nothing. At the beginning of the film she has seven thousand francs in her pocket. At the end she has only four hundred left, and is sleeping in a plot of waste ground. But all hope is not lost, since beside her the lights of a huge block of flats stand in for the stars.

If the principle of the *mise en scène* is the same here as in *Un Condamné à mort*, the result is far from the same. Complicating things in order to achieve simplicity is not within the reach of everybody. So I shall not attempt to defend *Une Simple Histoire* on a Bressonian level, but by referring to theories beloved of André Bazin and Cesare Zavattini. In its script, *Une Simple Histoire* closely resembles *The Story of Caterina* (one of the sketches in *Love in the City*), directed by Maselli from a script by Zavattini. Or rather, in its script *Une Simple Histoire* resembles Maselli's *mise en scène*; in its *mise en scène* it resembles Zavattini's script.

Like the Italian film, *Une Simple Histoire* tells a true story. It makes no difference that, as some have complained, an actress plays the leading role, whereas with Zavattini the real-life heroine played herself. For, from the simple fact that the role was re-enacted, in other words that a real person became a character, Zavattini's Caterina automatically, even unconsciously, became an actress. The important thing is that *Une Simple Histoire* is presented as a document, a clinical report. I stress the word 'clinical'. For Marcel Hanoun is to be congratulated on having produced a film in which the suspense does not arise from the 'social' aspect of the heroine's adventures but from its 'morbid' side. Marcel Hanoun's originality is that he has been able to describe not only a dramatic situation but a character. This is why I quite like the film. Because Micheline Bezançon (in spite of an over-stylized commentary, or because of it – I'm not sure and I don't care) seems to me, like Jean Gabin[2] twenty years ago, a 'human animal'. You may not like *Une Simple Histoire*, and you may be right. But if you don't go to see it, you will certainly be making a mistake.

77: Jean Renoir and Television

At the end of 1958, several of his projects having momentarily fallen through (in particular *Trois Chambres à Manhattan*,[1] starring Leslie Caron and based on the novel by Simenon, as well as *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe*),[2] Jean Renoir started work on *Le Testament du Docteur Cordelier* with the backing of R.T.F.[3] and Jean-Louis Barrault in the leading role. The film is currently being edited, following the most revolutionary shooting in the whole of French cinema. The techniques of live TV (that is, a dozen cameras recording *en bloc* scenes carefully rehearsed in advance as in the theatre) have enabled the director of *La Règle du Jeu* and *Eléna* to prove that he really is the groundswell behind the New Wave, and that he still leads the world in sincerity and audacity.

Jean-Luc Godard: *Le Docteur Cordelier* is, I believe, a modern adaptation of Stevenson's celebrated *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*?

Jean Renoir: Absolutely not. No, not at all. Or at least not as people suppose. I had no intention of doing an adaptation. Let's say, if you will, that it was in a sense memories of reading Stevenson's book that gave Jean Serge and me the idea for *Cordelier*. Actually, the film's proper title is *Le Testament du Docteur Cordelier*. But there was on our part absolutely no attempt at or preconceived idea of transposition, in the real sense of the word. I feel very strongly about this.

Godard: In other words, it's the crystallization of a literary reverie?

Renoir: Yes, that's *Cordelier*. You know, one is always inspired by something, even in producing the most original thing in the world. Sooner or later one must set off from a point, even if nothing of that point remains in the final result. It's like Racine and antiquity.

Godard: Or like *La Règle du Jeu* and *Les Caprices de Marianne*?[4]

Renoir: Exactly. But this time I have improvised even more than usual, although in a rather different way, conditioned by television methods. I have a tendency to be a little too theoretical when I start work. I say what I want to say a little too clearly, as if I were delivering a lecture, and it's very troublesome. But gradually it begins to come right.

Godard: And television, with its particular methods of shooting – several cameras, several microphones – has confirmed you in an approach which has been yours for a long time?

Renoir: Yes. Television made me discover things which I could not have discovered, or only with a great deal of difficulty, on a film set. What I was saying to you about actors and the reactions they bring to something – which one would be crazy not to take advantage of – well, in a television studio you are forced to let these extend to the entire technical crew. The technicians are obliged to become actors – invisible actors, but with their part to play in the creation of the work.

Of course in a film studio you can sometimes give a certain responsibility to the boom-operator, the focus-puller, or the dolly-man. But in television you are forced to do so. Quite simply because there are nine or ten cameras rolling at once, and each of the nine or ten operators is sole master in charge of his viewfinder. Everything depends on having a good understanding from the start. My job is simply to bring these various forces together, as a watchmaker assembles the various cogs and wheels of his mechanism. Then one starts it off, and each of these cogs adds its own personal note to the final concert.

Godard: The opposite, in fact, of the system whereby the director has sole control of his world?

Renoir: Let's say rather that here everyone becomes his own master and his

own servant too. One very gratifying thing about television is this sort of keenness in the entire crew, because everybody feels that he really is responsible. I was feeling my way tentatively, but I think I learned a great deal. And if only for this reason, *Cordelier* is an interesting experience. I think it enabled me to define certain principles of shooting which, if not entirely new, are at least different from those currently in use in the cinema.

What I like about television is that it obliges me to indulge in collaboration, of theatre and cinema for example. Thanks to the small screen, I have at last found a means of expression which enables me to shoot each scene in dramatic continuity.

Basically, however, there is nothing very new about what I have done. All Charlie Chaplin's films were shot on this principle. They are divided into sequences, each one being a complete story. Once the starting-point of a scene has been established and the mechanism set in motion, then the development depends on the actors. And the important, the essential thing is that the development of a scene must not be artificial. When one is able to follow an actor in continuity, one is leading him, in spite of himself but thanks to him, towards public confession. And this is more or less the subject of my film. Cordelier will, I believe, be a touching character because he is led to make a confession.

Godard: What do you think of the fundamental division between television and cinema which exists in France?

Renoir: I think it's a pity. My job is to devise and to create entertainments, and I cannot conceive of specialization. I believe that art today is moving more and more in the opposite direction to industry. In the latter, people are constantly specializing. An electrician knows nothing about aeronautics, and conversely. Whereas in the artistic field, the reverse seems to be happening.

Nowadays a man of the theatre can, I believe, bring a lot to the cinema; someone working in television can bring much to the theatre, a film-maker to television, and vice versa. There is not one art which is cinema, another the theatre, a third poetry, and so on. All the media are good because there is only one art of entertainment. At present in France film and television people do not get on very well together. But this is simply because television belongs to the State and the cinema to private concerns, because television people are paid by the month and cinema people by the week.

Godard: So the division is purely arbitrary?

Renoir: Of course. At all periods people have jumped from one art to another. Take Molière: he wrote ballets or tragedies if he felt like it. And today no one feels obliged to present *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* at the Opéra-Comique on the pretext that it is a singing and dancing entertainment. No, it is performed in the same theatre as *Le Misanthrope*. So why should anyone try to force me to shoot *Cordelier* at the Boulogne or Saint-Maurice studios instead of in those of R.T.F.?

I am an author determined to express myself. And I think an author has the right to express himself where he pleases – in the sawdust ring, on the boards of the Opéra, in front of a Cross of Malta camera or an electronic one. What difference does it make? It seems there is a move to prevent my film from being shown in cinemas on the pretext that it will have been shown on television. But they forget that ultimately the only judge is the public.

78: Debarred Last Year from the Festival Truffaut will Represent France at Cannes with *Les 400 Coups*

As soon as the screening was over, the lights came up in the tiny auditorium. There was silence for a few moments. Then Philippe Erlanger, representing the Quai d'Orsay, leaned over to André Malraux. 'Is this film really to represent France at the Cannes Festival?' 'Certainly, certainly.' And so the Minister for Cultural Affairs ratified the Selection Committee's decision to send to Cannes, as France's sole official entry, François Truffaut's first full-length feature, *Les Quatre cents coups*.

What matters is that for the first time a young film has been officially designated by the powers-that-be to reveal the true face of the French cinema to the entire world. And what one can say of Truffaut could equally well be said of Alain Resnais, of Claude Chabrol if *Les Cousins* had been chosen to represent France at Cannes, of Georges Franju and *La Tête contre les murs*, of Jean-Pierre Melville and *Deux Hommes dans Manhattan*, of Jean Rouch and *Moi, un Noir*. And the same words apply to other Jeans, their brothers and their masters: Renoir and his *Testament du Docteur Cordelier*, and Cocteau, of course, had Raoul Lévy[1] at last made up his mind to produce *Le Testament d'Orphée*.

The face of the French cinema has changed.

Malraux made no mistake. The author of *La Monnaie de l'absolu* could hardly help recognizing that tiny inner flame, that reflection of intransigence, shining in the eyes of Truffaut's Antoine as he sports a man's hat to steal a typewriter in a sleeping Paris; for it is the same as that which glittered twenty years ago on Tchen's dagger on the first page of *La Condition Humaine*.

The director of *L'Espoir* was better placed than anybody to know what this reflection meant: the principal form of talent in the cinema today is to accord more importance to what is in front of the camera than to the camera itself, to answer first of all the question 'Why?' in order then to be able to answer the question 'How?' Content, in other words, precedes form and conditions it. If the former is false, the latter will logically be false too: it will be awkward.

In attacking over the last five years in these columns the false technique of Gilles Grangier, Ralph Habib, Yves Allégret, Claude Autant-Lara, Pierre Chenal, Jean Stelli, Jean Delannoy, André Hunebelle, Julien Duvivier, Maurice Labro, Yves Ciampi, Marcel Carné, Michel Boisrond, Raoul André, Louis Daquin, André Berthomieu, Henri Decoin, Jean Laviron, Yves Robert, Edmond Gréville, Robert Darène . . . what we were getting at

was simply this: your camera movements are ugly because your subjects are bad, your casts act badly because your dialogue is worthless; in a word, you don't know how to create cinema because you no longer even know what it is.

And we have more right than anyone to say this. Because if your name is emblazoned like a star's outside the cinemas on the Champs-Elysées, if people now talk about a Henri Verneuil film or a Christian-Jaque, just as they talk about a Griffith, Vigo or Preminger, it is thanks to us.

To those of us who on this paper, in *Cahiers du Cinéma*, *Positif* or *Cinéma 59*, no matter where, on the back page of *Figaro Littéraire* or *France-Observateur*, in the prose of *Lettres Françaises* and sometimes even the schoolgirl stuff of *L'Express*, those of us who waged, in homage to Louis Delluc, Roger Leenhardt and André Bazin, the battle for the film *auteur*.

We won the day in having it acknowledged in principle that a film by Hitchcock, for example, is as important as a book by Aragon. Film *auteurs*, thanks to us, have finally entered the history of art. But you whom we attack have automatically benefited from this success. And we attack you for your betrayal, because we have opened your eyes and you continue to keep them closed. Each time we see your films we find them so bad, so far aesthetically and morally from what we had hoped, that we are almost ashamed of our love for the cinema.

We cannot forgive you for never having filmed girls as we love them, boys as we see them every day, parents as we despise or admire them, children as they astonish us or leave us indifferent; in other words, things as they are. Today, victory is ours. It is our films which will go to Cannes to show that France is looking good, cinematographically speaking. Next year it will be the same again, you may be sure of that. Fifteen new, courageous, sincere, lucid, beautiful films will once again bar the way to conventional productions. For although we have won a battle, the war is not yet over.

79: *The Perfect Furlough*

Of Blake Edwards, one excellent and one unpleasant memory. The excellent one was *Mister Cory*, in which Tony Curtis played a character morally similar to Stendhal's Lamiel.[1] The unpleasant one was a nasty little film with Curt Jurgens.[2] Now here comes *The Perfect Furlough* to make one regret that Blake Edwards did not write the script himself, as he did for *Mister Cory*. Given a Tony Curtis in good form, Edwards could surely have made something more out of this banal comedy concerning the Parisian misadventures of a NATO soldier. This said, the direction still manages an idea per shot, often charming (Tony Curtis behind a curtain as Janet Leigh takes a bath), sometimes funny (Tony Curtis worrying about the meaning of the word *ampoule*),[3] and occasionally remarkable (Janet Leigh falling into a wine-vat under the gaze of a sublimely eccentric Dalio).

80: *La Tête contre les Murs*

Contrary to all expectations, Georges Franju's first feature has been greeted

with a certain coolness – to say the least – by the majority of licensed film critics (yes, indeed, licensed like Carette for poaching in *La Règle du Jeu*). So instead of joining in the expected chorus of praise, I shall be appealing against sentence; for although the film saw its Parisian career cut short, it has been going quite well in the provinces, and this proves that people are wrong to consider *La Tête contre les murs* as a strange, abnormal, violent, subversive, and, to put it bluntly but in inverted commas, 'poetic' film. In fact, *La Tête contre les murs* is the opposite, still in inverted commas, of an 'inspired' film. It is discreet, tender and precise.

Why precise? Because Franju decomposes. And decomposition does not only mean the bleeding flesh dripping down the screen in cinemas showing *Le Sang des bêtes*. No. Decomposition may be this at the beginning, but as Franju confirms the *auteur* theory, growing better as he grows older and moving from the close-up to the medium shot, decomposition becomes the tiny, incisive gesture with which Mocky unbuckles Anouk Aimée's belt, and which is the more effective in that it remains framed in medium shot: a unique gesture, in which abstraction is carried so far that it comes effortlessly round – but to the power squared – to pure epidermic sensation *à la* Vadim.

A single gesture lasting three seconds, therefore, and a whole five-minute scene is impregnated by it, justified, given its plastic rhythm, or to put it another way, is dramatically scored by it. And this, moreover, is Franju's art, or rather one of the secrets of his art: directing, making a film, writing a scenario, is to turn the camera's gaze on faces and objects long enough to brand them deeply, as the sinner once was branded by the executioner, or the elect by a sign from God.

In this one recognizes the fundamental principle of German Expressionism: which will surprise no one, as Franju's admiration for, and indebtedness to, the director of *Mabuse* is well known. As we have just seen, he shares with Lang a predilection for effects in long shot, which separates them from Welles or Hitchcock, and might perhaps be the distinguishing mark of directors in whom logic takes precedence over reticence but never stifles it because one inevitably justifies the other. An impulse of the spirit prompts them to stress something or other, while at the same moment an impulse of the heart forces them to keep their distance. Let us say, therefore, that it is impossible to be more romantically classical than Georges Franju.

La Tête contre les murs proves it, if only through the script. It is decomposed in three parts, like any self-respecting syllogism. One, reality. Two, madness. Three, reality again. One sees the advantage of this method. The second reality is seen in the light of the madness, just as the madness was itself seen in the light of the first reality. The wheel comes full circle, and it has run in a straight line. Franju is one of the great. It is curious, to say the least, to reproach him for an aesthetic dating, if not from the silent cinema at least from the mid-thirties, by comparison with a modern (in inverted commas again) cinema represented by *Les Cousins* or *Moi, un Noir*. One might just as well fault the editing of *Mr Arkadin* for still subscribing to the virtues of the

montage of *October*. It is true that *La Tête contre les murs* is cinema of the past. But who can say that this cinema of the past, if not today's, will not be that of tomorrow?

Final argument against *La Tête contre les murs* by green card-holders:[1] one is not interested by the characters – in other words, a madman is not cinematographic. But as I watched Charles Aznavour achieve his death, a sentence from the last page but one of *La Nouvelle Histoire de Mouchette* by Bernanos (also Georges) came to mind: 'With the exception of madmen, accountable to some other, darker law, no one tries twice to commit suicide.' This darker law is the one which Franju's cinema attempts to formulate.

81: *The Perfect Furlough*

It is a great pity that Blake has not put his name – nor Edwards his Christian name – to this amiable or, as you like it, banal American comedy. If he had, these Parisian adventures would have been like those of the extravagant Mister Cory, since Tony Curtis is still at the party, and with Janet Leigh also present the party soon becomes jolly for those who choose to join in. So much the worse for Blake Edwards, who did not.

One can affirm, on the other hand, that he was right to put his name to the *mise en scène*. It is rather reminiscent in its furbelows[1] of Becker's in *Dernier Atout*, and consequently proves that Blake Edwards had not played all his cards[2] as *This Happy Feeling*, of sinister memory, led one to think. The publicity was not altogether wrong in talking of 287 gags, since the script comprises 287 numbers, and there is an idea per shot. Agreed, they are usually thin, but never vulgar. For instance, when Janet Leigh, wrapped up in a sheet to do the washing up, tells Tony Curtis that a Frenchman (admirably played by Dalio, in excellent form) has just told her that she has a loyal face and that only Frenchmen can think of such charming compliments, and Tony Curtis says that as an American the only thing he can think of saying is that she has 'a pretty face'. Using the sentimental differences between languages and nationalities in this way is something that would please Valéry-Larbaud.[3] There is also the gag with Tony Curtis worrying about the meaning of the word *ampoule*. And above all, a gag worthy of Buster Keaton in which Janet Leigh falls into a vat after the gorgeous Linda Cristal. A very small film, in other words, but it leaves one with one's confidence in Blake Edwards intact.

82: *Goha*

Rather like *L'Eau vive*, if one allows that Schehadé ranks with Giono, *Goha* is a film almost beyond criticism. It resembles Baudelaire's albatross: its beauty is as blundering as its blunders are beautiful. Each is the other's one and only witness, just as Baratier the Simple is the witness of Goha the Simple, and vice versa.

From this, everything follows. The temptation to which Baratier yielded in adapting the book by Josipovici and Ades, and then asking Georges Schehadé to write the dialogue, was a legitimate one, and the blunder became

a superior kind of blunder called 'cunning'. For in the temptation there was a design to make a film as 100 per cent Arab as Jules Verne's *La Machine à vapeur* is 100 per cent Hindu; and in this design, a desire to discover a certain form of poetry which is the opposite of ours, a poetry which interiorizes rather than exteriorizes, a poetry which is born as soon as there is emptiness round its cradle, exactly as light springs up in a neon tube.

Goha is, therefore, devoid of technical virtuosity. It had to be, for Goha is pre-eminently anti-Figaro. Pointless to use a complicated tracking shot to follow him to the market-place where he exchanges oranges for kicks. Pointless to use erudite compositions when he and his ass learn from the mouths of the doctors that truth is both abrasive and slippery. The sort of flashy direction rather too much in vogue today would have brought nothing to *Goha* but less sincerity. But Baratier had to go further even than sincerity. Hence the clumsiness of his fix-focus shots, which attempt to fix simplicity straight in the eye, and consequently, to fix the poetry which swoops down on the shutter, exactly as the alchemist fixes a substance between two plates of glass. So the clumsiness is not a mark of incompetence, but of reticence.

However, all the comic sketches involving Goha should have been arranged as threads linking him to his Tunisian Ariadne.

For what is ultimately lacking in *Goha* is any profound subject. And Baratier's mistake has been to present us not with Goha, but a documentary about Goha. Luckily for him and for us, it's an engaging mistake.

83: *India*

Pending a more detailed analysis, a few passwords: *India* is a film technician's film, the only one apart from *Hiroshima, mon amour* to have been shown at Cannes. The rest, *Nazarin* and *Les Quatre cents coups*, being films by adventurers in celluloid. *India* is the opposite of *Orfeu Negro*, in the sense that it would still be beautiful even if it had been shot at the Joinville studios. But this is of no consequence since, as it says in some book of wisdom or other, 'Truth is in all things, even, partly, in error.'[1] I find this 'partly' sublime. It explains everything. It explains why the shot of the tiger is blown up from 16 mm, whereas the reverse angle of the old man is in 35 mm. *India* runs counter to all normal cinema: the image merely complements the idea which provokes it. *India* is a film of absolute logic, more Socratic than Socrates. Each image is beautiful, not because it is beautiful in itself, like a shot from *Que Viva Mexico!*, but because it has the splendour of the true, and Rossellini starts from truth. He has already gone on from the point which others may perhaps reach in twenty years time. *India* embraces the cinema of the whole world, as the theories of Riemann and Planck[2] embraced geometry and classical physics. In a future issue,[3] I shall show why *India* is the creation of the world.

84: *Tarawa Beachhead*

Of Paul Wendkos, we have already seen and quite liked *The Burglar*, a film

which is a little too aesthetic to match the original, a novel by David Goodis, a man with a fluent talent whom Truffaut ranges alongside Dashiell Hammett on his bedside-table, the proof being that he plans to shoot his *Tirez sur le pianiste*, which promises 800 blows. Paul Wendkos, therefore, is a film-maker not to lose sight of, since he for his part never loses sight of the cinema. And so it is that here on Tarawa beach, for the most bloody landing of the whole Pacific, with an ultra-hackneyed script, he manages to patch up at top speed[1] a little film which is singularly pleasing to the eye because the action sequences are sharply handled, and which also pleases the mind because the dialogue scenes are lodged under the same sign: in other words, as though the Brooks of *Take the High Ground* were filming Penn's *The Left-handed Gun*, or to put it differently again, under the sign of a Walsh revised and corrected by Mulligan. In particular one might cite the character of the officer (in whom one recognizes with pleasure the tennis-player from *Too Much, Too Soon*[2] who makes one think of Drieu la Rochelle's Gilles).[3] And in general one might cite the fine tracking shots which spring up between two fix-focus images, like a sniper between two thickets, to place a grenade in the CinemaScope slit of a Japanese pill-box.

85: *Orfeu Negro*

What would the Concerto for Clarinet be without Mozart? What would the *Head of a Girl* be without Vermeer? And the reveries of Rousseau without Jean-Jacques, the music of Beethoven without Beethoven, Aragon's prose without Aragon? What, in short, would Orpheus' song (have you seen *Orphée* again recently?) be without Orpheus? Or what would poetry be without a poet?

Well, it would be *Orfeu Negro*, in which the Cannes jury more or less acknowledged their *Friendly Persuasion*.[1] The amiability and sincerity of Marcel Camus are not in question. But then, does being amiable and sincere suffice to make a good film? One might already have asked this same question after *Mort en fraude*, for it was a very worthy, a very original idea in itself to refuse everything offered to you in order to make a film in Indo-China. But in that case one does not choose Daniel Gélin to personify a quiet Frenchman,[2] a hero of our time as Lermontov would say. Very worthy, too, to make a film in Brazil instead of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, to film the tramways of Rio rather than the overheads at Passy. But in that case one does not direct one's coloured actors with the same words and gestures as Jean Boyer directing Line Renaud and Darry Cowl in some dance-hall reconstructed at the Billancourt studios.

Granted that *Orfeu Negro* has only a remote connection with the singer of Thrace, although Cocteau (have you seen *Orphée* again recently?) was careful not to make this blunder; but the most serious thing is that, compared to a film like *Moi, un Noir*, *Orfeu Negro* is – to talk like *Madame Express*[3] – totally unauthentic. Don't be stupid, I shall be told, that isn't what the film is about at all: it is first and foremost a collection of Baroque and sumptuous

Have you seen *Alphaville* again recently . . . ?

images. A document on beauty, in fact. Like Zazie,[4] I say politely, 'My eye!' to anyone who tells me that Jean Bourgoin's images are beautiful. They do not even have the excuse of intending to be picture-postcards like *South Pacific*. How did the clever cameraman of *Goha* and *Mr Arkadin* manage to be so foolish as to think he could compete with the sunshine of Rio by using coloured filters which give the décor a hard and repellent look, whereas the light which greets the Cariocas each morning as they go to work is the same soft, grey light as in Brittany, a thousand times superior to its Mediterranean sister?

Marcel Camus, having run out of money and awaiting a cheque from Sacha Gordine so as to be able to finish his film, had plenty of time to explore on foot that pretty phenomenal city which is Rio de Janeiro. It was then, he said, during these wanderings, that he really got to know Rio de Janeiro and its people.

And it is here that I take him to task. It so happens that I found myself in exactly the same situation. And I am astonished, very disappointed even, to see nothing of Rio in *Orfeu Negro*. I did not see the marvellous little airport of Santos-Dumont, where Eurydice should have landed between the sea and the skyscrapers. And why did he not make Orpheus (have you seen Cocteau's

. . . not to mention *Orphée*?

film again?) a conductor on a Lotacao instead of on a tram such as we have already seen in all those Pete Smith comedies from Metro? There is something poetic about these little buses like station-wagons which plunge breathlessly from the Maracana Stadium to the Copacabana beach. Poetic, too, the way Orpheus would have held his notes for giving change: folded lengthwise between the fingers of each hand.

But Marcel Camus, after having been such a compliant assistant for fifteen years, has lost the feeling for poetry. Unlike Cukor, he is unable to disguise his girls as Louis XV marquises.[5] Strolling down the Avenida Vargas, he does not hear the samba music coming from the portable radios in every shop. As Eurydice arrives by train, he should have capitalized on it to film one of those fantastic derailments which are the speciality of the Brazilian railway company.

To be fair, there is one good shot in *Orfeu Negro*: the one in which Eurydice's friend, standing on her lover's toes, bends down to put out the light. But the scene would have been even better had it been played by Orpheus and Eurydice instead of by their friends. To cut a long story short, what offends me about this adventurer's film is that it contains no adventure, or this poet's film, that it contains no poetry.

Une Femme est une Femme: Anna Karina

Une Femme est une Femme: Jean-Claude Brialy and Anna Karina

86: *Une Femme est une Femme:* Scenario by Godard from an idea by Geneviève Cluny

The time is today, and the place either a provincial city like Tours, or a Paris *quartier* such as Strasbourg-Saint-Denis.

It all begins late one Friday afternoon, and ends twenty-four hours later on Saturday evening.

The three principal characters are Josette, Emile and Paul. There is also Suzanne, a friend of Josette and (maybe) Paul, but she isn't very important.

Emile and Josette have been living together for some time in a small three-room apartment overlooking a street running parallel to the 'grands boulevards' (assuming the film is set in Paris).

Emile is a bookseller by profession. He runs a small book and newspaper shop in a street running off the grands boulevards. He likes Dashiell Hammett and *Marie-Claire*.[1]

The entire action takes place within an area of about a hundred square metres. It is important that the characters should be able to talk from window to window or window to door. Josette will speak to Suzanne like this, and Emile can summon Paul, if he wants, from the café below.

What does Paul do? He is a street photographer: at night on the boulevard, in other words, he bombards passers-by with a camera.

And Josette? Ah, Josette! You wouldn't think so, but she's a stripper in a cheap club near the Porte Saint-Martin. She does her stuff twice in the afternoon, three times in the evening. Charleston and Bayadère, Sambas and Marquises, Josette believes in her art and practises conscientiously in front of a mirror.

On Friday evenings there is no show. Which is why, taking advantage of this fact, the film opens with Josette coming home to prepare the evening meal.

She meets Paul on the boulevard. He pretends to take a photograph of her. One can see that Paul would like to make it with Josette because she is so trim and shapely.

But it so happens that Emile and Josette adore each other. Paul, therefore, cherishes a vain dream (like Pola Illery for Albert Préjean in René Clair's superb *14 Juillet*).

(At the club, a suggestion that Josette wants to have a baby and get married: a child she plays with as it waits patiently for its mother to finish her act; or some baby-knitting which all the girls take turns at for some pregnant comrade who can't make ends meet, etc. The same casual suggestion in the street. But rather than make Josette look at children, have her stare at old people, thus making her worry about her own youth and increasing her desire to have a child before it is too late, even though she is only twenty-five.)

So, Josette is alone at home preparing a meal for Emile and herself. She hesitates, talks to herself,wanders about, calls to Suzanne, shuts the window quickly because Emile is coming.

The evening meal. Quarrel between Emile and Josette because suddenly, after five minutes of the usual banter, when Emile says 'Boiled eggs, not too hard', Josette replies, 'All right, if you give me a child.'

By an absurd but unassailable process of reasoning, she proves to Emile that he doesn't love her since he wants neither to marry her nor to have a child. Emile says life is very good as it is, and let's see in a couple of years. Josette says, not in a couple of years, right now. It's been going on too long already.

She wants a child immediately, and launches into an absurd argument whose very absurdity means she won't be able to change her mind if she follows it through. Josette in effect blackmails Emile: Suppose I get someone else to give me a child?

The discussion degenerates. Emile takes Josette at her word because he loves her. And Josette lets herself be caught in the trap because she loves him. Emile says that anyone will give her a child. Josette says she'll ask the first man she sees.

Gag about the first man, who just then knocks at the door. It's the concierge, bringing back some clean laundry.

Josette funks it. Emile gloats. Josette says that if Emile thinks she is going to back down, he's mistaken. Don't let me stop you, says Emile, making the best of a bad job to the point of himself summoning Paul who happens (happy coincidence!) to be in the café below.

And because they love each other, everything is going to go wrong for Emile and Josette, who have made the mistake of thinking they can go too far because their love is both mutual and eternal.

Paul leaps at the chance, and arrives thirty seconds after Emile's summons. Emile acts as master of ceremonies and asks Paul if he will be so kind as to give the young lady a child, that's right, a child.

Paul blinks a bit. Despite his raffish airs, he didn't expect this. Josette, who hasn't said anything, decides that Emile has gone too far and needs to be taught a lesson. She takes Paul into the bathroom. Left alone, Emile pretends to be enjoying himself hugely. He glues his ear to the bathroom door. Not a sound to be heard. The door is locked. He is worried, but doesn't show it.

When Josette and Paul come out of the bathroom, their faces radiant, he is deep in a book. Josette flirts a little with Paul in front of Emile, who says nothing. Suddenly, without warning, as Paul is caressing her where he shouldn't, Josette slaps him. Emile laughs. Paul begins to giggle. Josette, furious, turns them both out of the apartment which, being an inheritance from her grandparents, is hers more than Emile's. Emile and Paul leave, joking and making fun of the female sex.

Left alone, Josette abuses them, talking to herself in front of her mirror. She convinces herself that as Emile refuses she has no choice but to become pregnant by another man.

Emile returns. He has forgotten something or other. They decide, in the course of their conversation, not to speak to each other any more. They go to bed in silence. Various gags.

The following morning. They decide again not to speak to each other any more. More gags. Before leaving Emile wants to kiss Josette. Listen, Josette, this is silly. Josette replies rudely but with great politeness, like Johnny Guitar when he insults the sheriff. So Emile leaves, slamming the door, which reopens. Josette slams it shut again so hard that it reopens once more. This happens two or three times. She has to go at it very carefully, which irritates her enormously.

Once again Josette is alone. Just then, a telephone call from Paul, arranging for her to meet him at eleven at the café on the corner. Paul absolutely must speak to Josette about something very important which happened during the night.

Josette gets ready to go to meet him. From the window she sees Suzanne doing her shopping. She joins her in the street. Suzanne says Emile telephoned to ask her to keep an eye on Josette, who has gone crazy.

Wanting a child, is that crazy? says Josette. I'll show him, the dirty dog. And Josette leaves Suzanne, shaking her off so that she won't see her going to meet Paul.

Josette arrives at the café, where Paul is waiting. She asks if Emile has asked him to spy on her too. Paul is indignant. He says he is sincere. He has thought things over carefully since last night. He knows now that he really

loves Josette, to whom he offers, in order to improve his play, a second vermouth. Josette begins to waver. Paul has quite a few trumps in his hand. To persuade Josette to sleep with him he shows her, without mentioning that it dates from several years back, a photograph which he, Paul, had taken of Emile arm-in-arm with a girl.

(If Jean Poiret plays the role of Paul,[2] one might have an interlude with Michel Serrault disguised as a nun. He makes three thousand francs a day collecting for charity outside cafés. As the idea is Paul's, he has come to give him his cut.)

Josette really does want to have a child, but it should at least be with someone who is in love with her. And she is not yet very sure that Paul is really. Paul does his best to persuade Josette to come back to his place.

But Josette must go and prepare Emile's dinner. She leaves Paul, telling him to wait for her in the café across the street from the apartment. She says: if the shutters are still closed in five minutes, that means I'm coming down; if they are open, that I'm not coming, that Emile and I are reconciled.

Josette hurries upstairs to her apartment. She gets everything ready so that Emile can eat without her. She leaves little messages such as: the salt is in the sugar-bowl, the dish-cloths are with the table-napkins.

Then she closes the shutters to warn Paul that she is coming. But Emile comes in, wonders why it is so dark, and reopens them. This is repeated several times, seen from Paul's point of view, who makes several false starts.

Finally, Emile forces Josette to leave the shutters open, and Paul thinks Josette is reconciled with Emile, which she isn't at all.

After dinner, hurriedly dispatched by Emile while Josette refuses to eat and rehearses her striptease act (deliberately to excite Emile), they go out continuing their quarrel, irritating each other more than they should.

(Each time Josette is in the street, have her look round to show that she is thinking about having a baby, looking at the men passing by as possible fathers, looking at children or old people, particularly old people, who affect her deeply. Show that it's a deep-seated idea. The spectator, in other words, must find this absurd desire to have a baby within twenty-four hours rather touching. Josette, like many women, might have suddenly wanted to go to Marseille, to have an expensive new dress or a pastry or something, a sudden yearning which she would rather die than leave unsatisfied. It's silly, but there it is, a woman is a woman, and wanting a child, for a woman of twenty-five, is a noble notion.)

In the street, Emile, exasperated, suddenly stops a passer-by and asks point-blank if he would mind giving this lady a baby. (Shoot this scene like a newsreel with a hidden camera, to capture the reaction of someone selected at random, exactly as it happens during shooting.)

Emile accompanies Josette to her club, then returns alone to his bookshop. We stay with Emile, who is glooming among his books. Suddenly he decides to marry Josette. He rushes to the club, but she isn't there, the producer of the show tells him angrily.

Une Femme est une Femme: Jean-Claude Brialy and Anna Karina

Josette isn't at home either. No one has seen her, not even Suzanne. After closing the shop, Emile wanders about. He is so unhappy when a photographer friend of Paul's says he saw Josette and Paul together this morning that he thinks to hell with it.

So, near the Boulevard Sébastopol, he accepts an invitation from a prostitute. A little later we see him come downstairs and telephone round the hotels to ask if they have seen Paul with Josette. Then Emile telephones someone in Paul's building, trying to reach Paul, who has no telephone of his own. (Perhaps Paul might live across the street, with Emile being able to see but not hear him.)

Emile asks the tenant of the room below Paul's to go and see if Paul is in. Paul is there, in bed with Josette. The tenant comes down to tell Emile that Paul is in. Emile says to go back and tell Paul that he is going to Rio de Janeiro. The man climbs upstairs again to tell Paul that Emile said he was leaving for Rio de Janeiro.

Paul and Josette think Emile is crazy. Josette has dressed again by now. We stay with her until she reaches home. In the street she looks at herself in profile in a mirror, alternately pulling in and sticking out her stomach.

Josette returns in tears to Emile. He is not in a very sparkling mood himself. She tells him she has just slept with Paul, who had given her three

vermouths while playing an Aznavour record, which always makes her lose her head.

Emile is devastated when Josette tells him she is certainly pregnant. For his part, he does not tell her that he has been with a prostitute.

Sadly Josette and Emile lie down side by side and put out the light. After a few moments of silence in which the spectator gets accustomed to the dark, Emile says he has just thought of something. Josette says she is thinking the same thing. It is very simple. They will not know for some days whether Josette really is pregnant. To be sure, Emile proposes to give Josette a child. That way he will also be sure of being the father. Josette does not say no.

Once the deed is done, Josette switches on the light and says to Emile: Wow! That was a tight spot. Emile smiles. Josette, he thinks, is infamous.[3] No, she says. She is a woman.

87: The Ten Best Films of 1959

1. *Pickpocket* (Robert Bresson)
2. *Deux Hommes dans Manhattan* (Jean-Pierre Melville)
3. *Les Rendez-vous du diable* (Haroun Tazieff)
4. *Moi, un Noir* (Jean Rouch)
5. *La Tête contre les murs* (Georges Franju)
6. *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (Jean Renoir)
7. *Hiroshima, mon amour* (Alain Resnais)
8. *Les Quatre cents coups* (François Truffaut)
9. *Les Cousins* (Claude Chabrol)
10. *Du côté de la Côte* (Agnès Varda)

Marginal Notes While Filming: August 1959–August 1967

After the shooting of A Bout de Souffle *(and its success), Godard devotes more time to film-making than to criticism. He writes on increasingly rare occasions – the deaths of Jacques Becker and Jean Cocteau, the failure of* Les Carabiniers, *the banning of Jacques Rivette's* La Religieuse *(letter to André Malraux), introducing his films in Press books, the failure of* La Peau Douce – *or speaks in twin homage to Henri Langlois and Louis Lumière. Few articles, therefore, but many films (from* A Bout de Souffle *to* Week-end, *fifteen films in the eight years from 1959 to 1967, not counting sketches) and many interviews in newspapers and magazines the world over. Any systematic inventory of the latter is – already – impossible. Godard has spoken of many things in many languages. Of these innumerable interviews we have chosen to reprint only those – edited, revised and corrected by Godard himself – which appeared in* Cahiers du Cinéma. *From this more than prolific period we have also excluded, in addition to non-*Cahiers *interviews, all contributions by Godard to round-table discussions, conversations, dialogues, etc., inasmuch as he says nothing in them that does not appear in one form or another in his own articles or interviews. One should also record that in 1964 Godard was the star and subject of a television film in the series* Cinéastes de Notre Temps, *directed by Hubert Knapp and produced by Janine Bazin and A. S. Labarthe, as well as of a* Pour Notre Plaisir *programme, directed by Jacques Doniol-Valcroze. As for*

Godard's television appearances – and the scandals they aroused – they are as innumerable as his interviews. It remains merely for us to assure the reader that this last chapter, 'Marginal Notes While Filming', is central to Godard's work and, like it, far from finished.

88: Frère Jacques

Like Molière, Jacques Becker died on a strange and terrible battlefield: that of artistic creation. It was the moment when Caroline bites her finger till she draws blood because she has left Edouard, when Golden Marie (Cristobal's Gold, of course) forces back her tears as Manda climbs the scaffold. It was Saturday evening. The studio telephoned to say that the mixing of *Le Trou* was complete. Our brother Jacques breathed again. Mortally wounded for so long, he could now give up the struggle without dishonour. And a few minutes later, Jacques Becker was no longer alive. It was Sunday morning, the hour when Max plays his favourite record, when Lupin meets the Princess at Maxim's, when day finally dawns over 7 rue de l'Estrapade.

There are several good ways of making French films. Italian style,[1] like Renoir. Viennese, like Ophuls. New Yorker, like Melville. But only Becker was and is French as France, French as Fontenelle's rose and Bonnot's gang.[2] I happened to meet him during the sound mixing of *Le Trou*. Already

Filming *Le Petit Soldat*: Suzanne Schiffman, Raoul Coutard, Godard

ill, he was more handsome than ever. He talked about *Les Trois Mousquetaires*, and suddenly I understood. That dark moustache, that grey hair . . . he was d'Artagnan in *Twenty Years After*. And he was Lupin too. Just compare a photograph of Becker seated at the wheel of his Mercedes with the opening shot of *The Adventures of Arsène Lupin* and you will see that Robert Lamoureux was his spitting image.

So Jacques Lupin, alias Artagnan Becker, is dead. Let us pretend to be moved, for we know from *Le Testament d'Orphée* that poets only pretend to die.

89: *Le Petit Soldat*

It was under the benevolent eye of script-girl Suzanne Schiffman that we shot scene 7/2b of *Le Petit Soldat*, a film whose theme is not real but newsreel: in other words, with hand-held camera (fist clenched, like the Spanish Republicans in *L'Espoir*), a good deal of tracking, some over- and under-exposed shots, one or two rather blurred, to tell the story of a French secret agent who refuses to carry out a mission, but eventually does so after misadventures which include his capture and torture by a rival network. A story, in other words, for the benefit of distributors, which once deciphered becomes that of a man who feels that his reflection in the mirror does not correspond

Scene 7/2b in *Le Petit Soldat*

with his own image of himself, a man who thinks women should not be over twenty-five, a man who loves dear old Haydn's music, a man who wishes he too were able to carve his way with a knife, a man who is very proud of being French because he loves Joachim du Bellay and Louis Aragon, and who yet remains a little boy – so I have called him *The Little Soldier*.

90: The Ten Best Films of 1960

Les Bonnes Femmes (Claude Chabrol)
The Savage Innocents (Nicholas Ray)
Give a Girl a Break (Stanley Donen)
Sansho Dayu (Kenji Mizoguchi)
Moonfleet (Fritz Lang)
Nazarin (Luis Buñuel)
Poem of the Sea (Alexander Dovzhenko)
Psycho (Alfred Hitchcock)
Le Testament d'Orphée (Jean Cocteau)
Tirez sur le pianiste (François Truffaut)

91: *Une Femme est une Femme*

[Commentary by Godard for the record made of *Une Femme est une Femme*]

Side One

Background: Hurry up! Places, everyone!

Godard: Angéla wants a baby right away. Like many women, she might suddenly have wanted to go to Marseille, to have an expensive new dress, or a chocolate éclair or something . . . a sudden yearning which she would rather die than leave unsatisfied. Which is silly. But there it is: a woman is a woman. And after all, for a woman of twenty-four, wanting a child within twenty-four hours is a noble notion. Now . . . now since, as Bazin said, the cinema usurps the role of our eyes to present a world consonant with our dreams, it was extraordinarily tempting to make a Mitchell 300 usurp the gaze of this young Parisian, and so prove, while proving that a woman is always a woman, that the cinema is always cinema. Wait though, here she is. Angéla Récamier is her name.

Anna: Lights! Camera! Action!

Godard: Two blue eyes: Giraudoux. A red umbrella: Aragon. That is Angéla.

Friday afternoon
In Strasbourg-Saint-Denis

Music: theme tune

Anna: Hello! How are things?

Music: theme tune

Boy: Haven't you anything a bit more sexy?

Music

Brialy: Hi!

Anna: Are you still angry?

Brialy: No, my angel.

Anna: Do you love me, then?

Brialy: Yes, my angel.

Anna: Look, isn't this a pretty postcard, Emile . . .

Music: theme tune

Godard: Emile is a bookseller. He likes Dashiell Hammett and *Marie-Claire*.

Angéla leaves him to go to the Zodiac.
And this naïve Bayadère
Is very nearly as beautiful
As Ava Gard—ner.

Music: Anna's song 'Everyone wonders why?'

Godard: The invention of the cinema is based on a gigantic error: that of recording the image of man, and reproducing it by projecting it till the end of time. In other words, believing that a strip of celluloid is less perishable than a block of stone or even memory. This strange belief means that, from Griffith to Bresson, the history of the cinema and the history of its errors are one: the error of trying to paint ideas better than music, to illustrate actions better than the novel, to describe feelings better than painting. One may say, in short, that *errare cinematographicum est*. . . . But this error akin to Eve in the Garden of Eden

becomes fascinating in a thriller, arresting in a Western, blinding in a war film, and alluring in what is normally called a musical.

Music: Dance-hall jazz

Godard: Here the audience realizes that Emile plus Angéla plus Alfred= *Design for Living*.[1] That Alfred Lubitsch, in other words, would like to make it with Angéla. Very much so. But also that, like Paula Illery in the superb *14 Juillet*, he cherishes a vain dream.

Insult scene (Belmondo)

Belmondo-Anna scene: 'Why didn't you wait for me?'

Belmondo: Is that why you're sad?

Anna: No.

Music

Belmondo: Why, then?

Anna: Because I'd like to be in a musical . . .

Music: Organ.

Godard: Before, it was here. Now it's there.

There, as Angéla pays homage
In doing her housework.
Homage to whom?
To *My Sister Vera Ellen* . . .

American song

Godard: So American comedy is dead. Let it go at that[2] since everything goes at twenty-four frames a second. But I shall often look back. Witness the fact that Angéla is an old-fashioned girl, oddly so. The opposite of Madame Express, naturally.

Agreeing with the Pope about birth control. Of course.

Anna: Studying the Fertility Chart.

Music: theme tune

Anna (continuing to read the prospectus) *with theme music*: November the 10th . . . what's the date today?

Godard: Emile takes Angéla at her word because he loves her. And Angéla lets herself get caught in the trap because she loves him.

Brialy: What's the matter now?

Anna: Before a performance, one should bow to the audience.

Music: minuet

Brialy: What is it now?

Anna: You don't love me.

Anna-Brialy scene: 'I love no one but you.'

Music

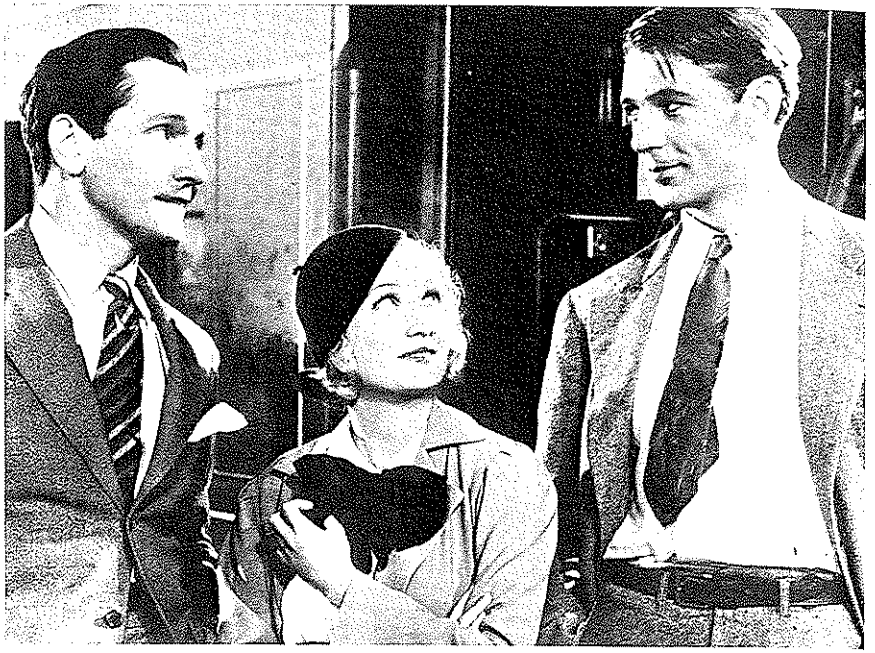
Anna: Emile, why don't you sweep up a bit . . .

Emile (sings): I love no one but you . . .

[Football match on the radio, with Jean Domarchi's voice commentating (Barcelona–Real Madrid)]

Music

Anna: I haven't finished yet.



Design for Living: Fredric March, Miriam Hopkins, Gary Cooper

Godard: These *enfants terribles* who live *Far from Rueil*[3] are building between themselves the same relationship as that between nature and the camera. The latter, after all, is first and foremost an apparatus for taking views, and directing is first and foremost humbly seeing things from their own point of view.
Anna-Brialy scene: 'Yes, Angéla, if we had a child.'
Anna: Why is it always the women who suffer . . .
Brialy: Look at Anquetil[4] during the Tour de France.
Scene up to: 'I want a baby.'
Brialy: I don't see why, all of a sudden . . .
Anna: I shall ask just anyone . . .
Brialy: Go on. It will do you good.
End of scene with police [End of first side of record]
Side Two
Godard: Be-cause-they-love-each-oth-er,
every-thing-will-go-wrong-for-E-mile-and-An-gé-la.
They-have-made-the-mis-take-of-thin-king-they-can-go-too-far.
Brialy: Angéla!
Godard: be-cause-their-love-is-both-mut-ual-and-et-er-nal-as-we-have-al-read-y-said.

Une Femme est une Femme: Jean-Claude Brialy, Anna Karina, Jean-Paul Belmondo

Anna: Emile!
Music
Anna: Farewell Camille, return to your convent.
Music
Brialy: I'll be back.
Godard: Angéla thinks that death justifies men. But that life justifies women. But – once again – rather than have Angéla look at children on the Boulevards and Pécuchet, make her look at old people, particularly old people who make a fantastic impression on her. For she does not distinguish between documentary and fiction. Just like me. So Angéla finally gets the impression that Alfred . . . Angéla gets the impression that Emile . . . Angéla, that is, gets the impression that she is being taken for a ride. In a coach, of course. For, rather like Camilla in Renoir's marvellous film[5], Angéla will soon be wondering where the theatre ends and where life begins.
Music
Anna: You disgust me . . .
Music: minuet
Anna: In comedies as well as tragedies, at the end of the Third Act . . .
Music

Godard: Angéla is alone once again. No one is less capable than this sincere young girl of that sort of grandiloquence which deliberately dramatizes the most insignificant adventure. Thus Angéla resembles a comic version of Chantal in Bernanos's novel.[6] At this point, a telephone call from Alfred. He absolutely must speak to Angéla about something very important which happened last night.

Music

So Angéla gallops to the Café Napoléon. Blue coat, white fur, red beret, for her the day of glory is come. It's strange. I meant to have a lot of gags in the big scene between Alfred and Angéla, but in the end there is nothing. They talk almost without moving, sitting on a seat, each in twelve sober frames of mind.[7] Because this is a talking picture. Besides, I have noticed in the cinema that one almost always does the exact opposite of what one had planned and yet it still comes out in the end as one had first imagined it. What does this prove? It proves that Chabrol is right:[8] the important thing is not the message but the vision.

Music

Belmondo: This morning in *Paris-Jour* (story of the telegram) . . . up to: 'I thought she was a girl a bit like you.'

Godard: Angéla returns home to Emile in tears. She announces that she has slept with Alfred. Emile hits upon a Socratic phrase to serve as conclusion to this marivaudage – though marivaudage isn't the right word. If Angéla were called Marianne, it would be Musset[9] – after all, it is the story of a caprice. Anyhow, all I wanted to say was that *Così fan tutte*. Unfortunately, I forgot to tell Michel Legrand to compose a variation or two on that. Oh well, no matter. Listen to this, it's the moment when Emile is so unhappy that he feels to hell with it.

Music: theme tune

Brialy: So it is that people are unjust and cruel.

Music

The three blows are struck

Music: minuet

Brialy: I don't know whether it's a comedy or a tragedy, but in any case it's a masterpiece.

Anna: Put on the Aznavour record.

Anna-Brialy scene: 'Ti, ti, ta, ti.'

Music: minuet

Anna-Brialy scene: 'Shall I put the light out?' to 'Yes, it's sad.'

Anna: I'm sorry, my darling (*music*: minuet)

Godard: Where does cinema begin? No doubt like the other arts when form becomes style. But let us be clear about style, for style is a matter of meaning. It's . . . I don't know. For instance, it's the perspective of Mizoguchi, the aggression of Orson Welles. Style . . . how can I express it? It is the reality which the mind claims for itself. I think, too, it is also the definition of liberty given by Hegel. One day, in defence of Chaplin's *A King in New York*, Rossellini said: 'This is the film of a free man.' Basically, that's it. To create cinema, all one has to do is film free people. Like Emile and Angéla. Right, music!

Music

Anna: Can't you read, you idiot? If you don't love me, I love you.

Brialy: And suppose you're pregnant?

Anna: Yes, it's terrible.

Music

Anna-Brialy scene: 'It's suddenly given me an idea . . .' to:

Anna: Let's go.

Music: theme tune

Anna: Wow!

Brialy: That was a tight spot . . . [whole scene to the end] 'You are infamous'.

Anna: I am not infamous. I am a woman.[10]

92: The Ten Best Films of 1961

1. *Two Rode Together* (John Ford)
2. *La Pyramide humaine* (Jean Rouch)
3. *Le Testament du Docteur Cordelier* (Jean Renoir)
4. *Les Godelureaux* (Claude Chabrol)
5. *Paris Nous Appartient* (Jacques Rivette)
6. *Rocco and his Brothers* (Luchino Visconti)
7. *Exodus* (Otto Preminger)
8. *Lola* (Jacques Demy)
9. *Era Notte a Roma* (Roberto Rossellini)
10. *The Thousand Eyes of Dr Mabuse* (Fritz Lang)

93: Interview with Jean-Luc Godard

Cahiers: Jean-Luc Godard, you came to the cinema by way of criticism. What do you owe to this background?

Godard: All of us at *Cahiers* thought of ourselves as future directors. Frequenting ciné-clubs and the Cinémathèque was already a way of thinking cinema and thinking about cinema. Writing was already a way of making films, for the difference between writing and directing is quantitative not qualitative. The only complete hundred-per-cent critic was André Bazin. The others – Sadoul, Balasz or Pasinetti – are historians or sociologists, not critics.

As a critic, I thought of myself as a film-maker. Today I still think of myself as a critic, and in a sense I am, more than ever before. Instead of writing criticism, I make a film, but the critical dimension is subsumed. I think of myself as an essayist, producing essays in novel form or novels in essay form: only instead of writing, I film them. Were the cinema to disappear, I would simply accept the inevitable and turn to television; were television to disappear, I would revert to pencil and paper. For there is a clear continuity between all forms of expression. It's all one. The important thing is to approach it from the side which suits you best.

I also think there is no reason why one should not be a director without being a critic first. It so happens that for us things came about the way I described, but this isn't a rule. In any case, Rivette and Rohmer made 16 mm films. But if criticism was a first rung on the ladder, it was not simply a means. People say we made use of criticism. No. We were thinking cinema and at a certain moment we felt the need to extend that thought.

Criticism taught us to admire both Rouch and Eisenstein. From it we learned not to deny one aspect of the cinema in favour of another. From it we also learned to make films from a certain perspective, and to know that if something has already been done there is no point in doing it again. A young author writing today knows that Molière and Shakespeare exist. We were the first directors to know that Griffith exists. Even Carné, Delluc and René Clair, when they made their first films, had no real critical or historical background. Even Renoir had very little; but then of course *he* had genius.

Cahiers: Only a fraction of the Nouvelle Vague have this sort of cultural equipment.

Godard: Yes, the *Cahiers* group, but for me this fraction is the whole thing. There's the *Cahiers* group (along with Uncle Astruc, Kast and – a little apart – Leenhardt), to which should be added what one might call the Left Bank group:[1] Resnais, Varda, Marker. And there is Demy. They had their own cultural background. But that's about the lot. The *Cahiers* group were the nucleus.

People say we can no longer write about our colleagues. Obviously it becomes difficult having a coffee with someone if that afternoon you have to write that he's made a silly film. But the thing that has always distinguished *Cahiers* from the rest is our principle of laudatory criticism: if you like a film, you write about it; if you don't like it, don't bother with tearing it to pieces. One need only stick to this principle. So, even if one makes films oneself, one can still say that so-and-so's film is brilliant – *Adieu Philippine*,[2] for instance. Personally I prefer to say so elsewhere than in *Cahiers*, because the important thing is to lead the profession round to a new way of thinking about the cinema. If I have the money, I prefer to pay for a page in a trade paper to talk about *Adieu Philippine*. There are people better qualified than me to talk about it in *Cahiers*.

Cahiers: Your critical attitude seems to contradict the idea of improvisation which is attached to your name.

Godard: I improvise, certainly, but with material which goes a long way back. Over the years you accumulate things and then suddenly you use them in what you're doing. My first shorts were prepared very carefully and shot very quickly. *A Bout de Souffle* began this way. I had written the first scene (Jean Seberg on the Champs-Elysées), and for the rest I had a pile of notes for each scene. I said to myself, this is terrible. I stopped everything. Then I thought: in a single day, if one knows how to go about it, one should be

able to complete a dozen takes. Only instead of planning ahead, I shall invent at the last minute. If you know where you're going it ought to be possible. This isn't improvisation but last-minute focusing. Obviously, you must have an over-all plan and stick to it; you can modify up to a point, but when shooting begins it should change as little as possible, otherwise it's catastrophic.

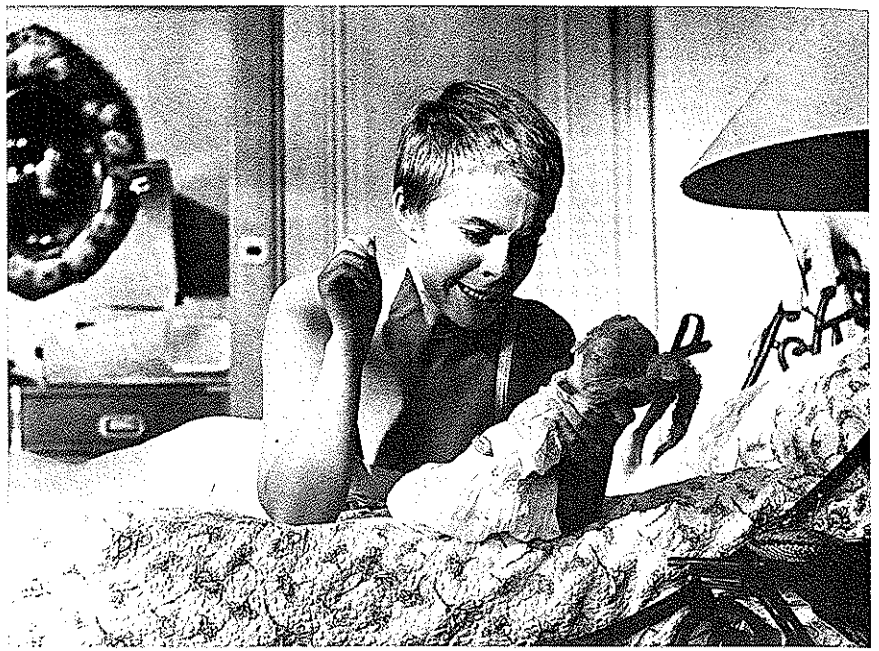
I read in *Sight and Sound* that I improvised Actors' Studio fashion, with actors to whom one says 'You are so-and-so; take it from there.' But Belmondo never invented his own dialogue. It was written. But the actors didn't learn it: the film was shot silent, and I cued the lines.

Cahiers: When you began the film, what did it mean to you?

Godard: Our first films were all *films de cinéphile* – the work of film enthusiasts. One can make use of what one has already seen in the cinema to make deliberate references. This was true of me in particular. I thought in terms of purely cinematographic attitudes. For some shots I referred to scenes I remembered from Preminger, Cukor, etc. And the character played by Jean Seberg was a continuation of her role in *Bonjour Tristesse*. I could have taken the last shot of Preminger's film and started after dissolving to a title, 'Three Years Later'. This is much the same sort of thing as my taste for quotation, which I still retain. Why should we be reproached for it? People in life quote as they please, so we have the right to quote as we please. Therefore I show people quoting, merely making sure that they quote what pleases me. In the notes I make of anything that might be of use for a film, I will add a quote from Dostoievsky if I like it. Why not? If you want to say something, there is only one solution: say it.

Moreover, *A Bout de Souffle* was the sort of film where anything goes: that was what it was all about. Anything people did could be integrated in the film. As a matter of fact, this was my starting-point. I said to myself: we have already had Bresson, we have just had *Hiroshima*, a certain kind of cinema has just drawn to a close, maybe ended, so let's add the finishing touch, let's show that anything goes. What I wanted was to take a conventional story and remake, but differently, everything the cinema had done. I also wanted to give the feeling that the techniques of film-making had just been discovered or experienced for the first time. The iris-in showed that one could return to the cinema's sources; the dissolve appeared, just once, as though it had just been invented. If I used no other processes, this was in reaction against a certain kind of film-making; but it should not be made a rule. There are films in which they are necessary; and sometimes they should be used more frequently. There is a story about Decoin[3] going to see his editor at Billancourt and saying: 'I have just seen *A Bout de Souffle*; from now on, continuity shots are out.'

If we used a hand-held camera, it was simply for speed. I couldn't afford to use the usual equipment, which would have added three weeks to the schedule. But this shouldn't be made a rule either: the method of shooting should match the subject. Of all my films, the one in which the shooting

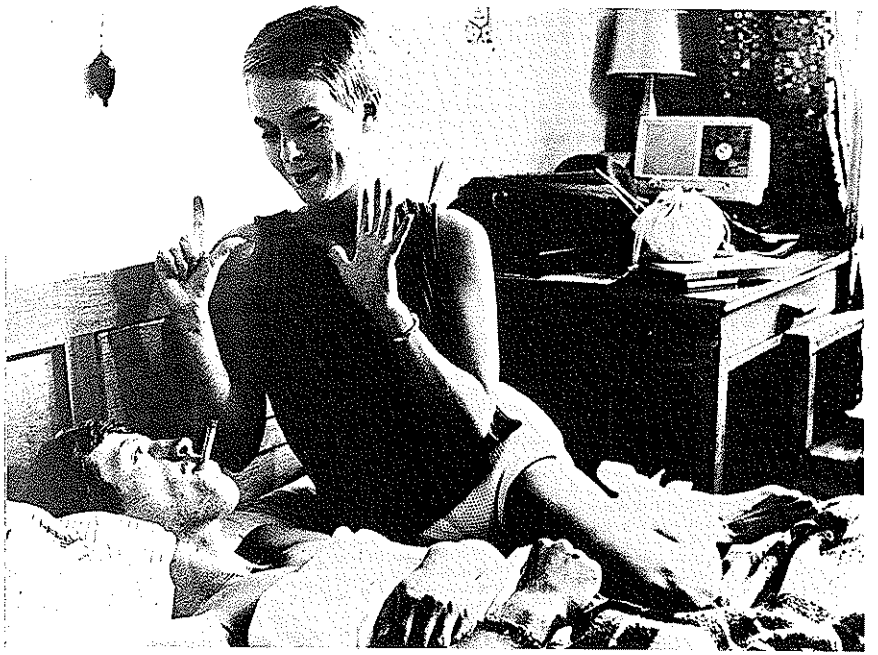


Jean Seberg in *Bonjour Tristesse* . . .

method is most justified is *Le Petit Soldat*. Seven out of ten directors waste four hours over a shot which should take five minutes of actual shooting: I prefer to have five minutes work for the crew – and keep the three hours to myself for thought.

What caused me a lot of trouble was the end. Should the hero die? To start with, I intended to do the opposite of, say, *The Killing*: the gangster would win and leave for Italy with his money. But as an anti-convention it was too conventional – like having Nana win out in *Vivre sa Vie* and drive away in the car. Finally, I decided that as my avowed ambition was to make an ordinary gangster film, I had no business deliberately contradicting the genre: he must die. If the House of Atreus no longer kill each other, they are no longer the House of Atreus.

But improvisation is tiring. I have always told myself: this is the last time, I can't do it again. It is too exhausting going to bed in the evening and wondering, what am I going to do tomorrow? It's like writing an article in a café at twenty to twelve when the deadline is midday. The curious thing is that you always do manage to write it, but working like that for months on end is killing. At the same time it is to a certain extent deliberate. One feels that if one is sincere and honest and one is driven into a corner over doing something, the result will necessarily be sincere and honest.



. . . and with Belmondo in *A Bout de Souffle*

The only thing is, one never does exactly what one intended. Sometimes one even does the opposite. At least this is true of me; but at the same time I am responsible for everything I do. After a certain time, for instance, I realized that *A Bout de Souffle* was not at all what I thought. I thought I had made a realistic film like Richard Quine's *Pushover*, but it wasn't that at all. In the first place I didn't have enough technical skill, so I made mistakes; then I discovered I wasn't made for this kind of film. There were also a lot of things I wanted to do but which I can't bring off. For instance, those shots of cars looming through the night in *La Tête contre les murs*. I would also like to compose shots that are magnificent in themselves like Fritz Lang, but I can't. So I do other things. Although I felt ashamed of it at one time, I do like *A Bout de Souffle* very much, but now I see where it belongs – along with *Alice in Wonderland*. I thought it was *Scarface*.

A Bout de Souffle is a story, not a thesis. A theme is something simple and vast which can be summed up in twenty seconds: vengeance, pleasure. A story takes twenty minutes to sum up. *Le Petit Soldat* has a theme: a young man is mixed up, realizes this, and tries to find clarity. In *Une Femme est une Femme*, a girl wants a baby right away. In *A Bout de Souffle* I was looking for the theme right through the shooting, and finally became interested in Belmondo. I saw him as a sort of block to be filmed to discover what lay

Fred MacMurray in *Pushover*: as much a model for Michel Poiccard as Bogart was

Le Petit Soldat

inside. Seberg, on the other hand, was an actress whom I wanted to see doing little things which amused me: this was the *cinéphile* side of me, which no longer exists.

Cahiers: How do you think of actors now?

Godard: My attitude towards them has always been in part that of an interviewer faced by an interviewee. I run behind and ask him something. At the same time, it is I who plan the course. If he gets tired or out of breath, I know he won't say the same as he would in other circumstances. But I have changed him in the way I planned the course.

Cahiers: What led you to *Le Petit Soldat*?

Godard: I wanted to discover the realism I had missed in *A Bout de Souffle*, the concreteness. The film developed from an old idea: I wanted to talk about brainwashing. They used to say to a prisoner: 'It may take twenty minutes or twenty years, but you can always make someone talk.' Events in Algeria made me replace brainwashing with torture, which had become the big question. My prisoner is someone who is asked to do something and doesn't want to. Simply doesn't want; and he digs his heels in, on principle. This is liberty as I see it: from a practical point of view. Being free is being able to do what you like, when you like.

The film should bear witness to the period. Politics are talked about in it, but it has no political bias. My way of engaging myself was to say: the Nouvelle Vague is accused of showing nothing but people in bed; my characters will be active in politics and have no time for bed. Well, politics meant Algeria. But I had to deal with this out of my own experience and my own feelings. If Kyrou or the people from *L'Observateur*[4] wanted it treated differently, that's fine, and they should have visited the F.L.N.[5] in Tripoli or somewhere with a camera. If Dupont wanted a different angle, he should have filmed Algiers from the point of view of the 'paras'. Nothing like that was done – more's the pity. I spoke of what concerned me, a Parisian in 1960, belonging to no party. And what concerned me was the problem of war and its moral repercussions. So I showed a man who poses himself a lot of problems. He can't resolve them, but to pose them, even confusedly, is already an attempt at a solution.

Cahiers: It has been described as a questionable film, and a confused one.

Godard: That's fine, I want it to raise questions. That's the point, apart from its thriller aspect. After seeing it, one can argue about the torture: I wanted to show that the most terrible thing about torture is that people who practise it don't find it arguable at all. They all end up by justifying it. The terrible thing is that, at first, no one ever thinks he might practise it one day or even just watch it being practised. By showing how one comes to accept it as normal, I am showing the most terrible thing about it. You mustn't forget, too, that I do not always maintain the same distance from my characters. You have to sense the moments when I am very close, those where I stand off. The first line in the film is: 'The time for action is past, that of reflection is beginning.' Therefore there is a critical angle. The whole film is a flashback: one never sees the present. The film which most influenced me was *The Lady from Shanghai*: Michael O'Hara (to whom there was a direct reference in the original scenario) also feels that the most important thing is to grow old gracefully. There is probably also some influence from *Pickpocket*.

As to the confusion: since it is a film about confusion, I had to show it. It appears throughout, and it is experienced by the hero, who discovers that both the O.A.S.[6] and the F.L.N. quote Lenin. Moreover, my character, often theoretical, increases the confusion by seeking in a sense to simplify things. The important thing was that one should believe in the character. One must be able to see that what he says is wrong, that he is wrong, and that suddenly something he says is right. One must be able to say then: what he said before was maybe not so wrong after all. Or, what he says now may not be so right after all. In any case, his way of saying these things is touching. Brice Parain, in *Vivre sa Vie*, says that error is necessary for the discovery of truth.

So the spectator is free. It may also be that he now better understands the complexity of the problem, a complexity which already existed before. So

there is no reason why one should not approach the problem from the viewpoint of someone who is completely confused. The interesting thing is not discussing for hours whether or not Salan[7] should be pardoned, but knowing whether, if you were in a position to shoot him, you would do it or not. Until you are in that position, you can't decide. This is the position I wanted to show in *Le Petit Soldat*. What is said in the film matters little if one can see that, in this situation, it could be said. The man is bizarre, confused, but not wrong. He thinks his solution is right: I don't say it's either right or wrong, simply that it's possible. Besides, subsequent events have proved me right in many ways.

Le Petit Soldat is a thriller where the mystery is political in origin, just as Dashiell Hammett's novel *Red Harvest* is a thriller with political elements. I have moral and psychological intentions which are defined through situations born of political events. That's all. These events are confused because that's how it is. My characters don't like it either. My film belongs to the generation which regrets not having been twenty at the time of the Spanish Civil War.

If it is important for Subor[8] to ask himself these questions, it is no less important for the spectator to ask them, and it is important to me that he should. If one thinks after seeing the film, 'he showed this but not the solution', one should be grateful to the film, not angry with it. The questions are asked badly? But it is, precisely, the story of a man who asks himself certain questions badly.

Cahiers: Would you define the character as an inside seen from the outside?[9]

Godard: No. For me, it's the inside seen from the inside. One should be with him, see things from his point of view while the external story unfolds. The film is like a secret diary, a notebook, or the monologue of someone trying to justify himself before an almost accusing camera, as one does before a lawyer or a psychiatrist. In *Vivre sa Vie*, on the other hand, the camera is a witness. But here the actor brings a great deal, helping me to clarify my ideas. Subor brought the slightly crazy, dazed, lost side of the character, and often it's his own reactions, his reflexes, coming into play.

Cahiers: How did the experience of *A Bout de Souffle* help you?

Godard: It helped, but I had a great deal of difficulty shooting *Le Petit Soldat*. We could have shot it in a fortnight. With the delays, it took two months. I was thinking, hesitating. Unlike *A Bout de Souffle*, I couldn't say everything. I could only say certain things – but which? It's a start if you know what not to say; through elimination, you get left with what should be said.

Now I know better how to go about it. I write the key moments of the film, which gives me a plot with seven or eight points. Then, when ideas come to me, I need only think which point – which scene – they belong to. The thing that helps me get ideas is the setting. Often I start from there. Geneva was a setting I knew, as I had lived there during the war. I think

about where to place the guide-marks after the scenario is written. First, one must think about the setting. Often, when someone writes 'He entered a room' and is thinking of a room he knows, the film is made by someone who is thinking of another room. So everything is dislocated. You don't live the same way in different settings. We are living on the Champs-Elysées.[10] Well, before *A Bout de Souffle*, no film showed what it was really like. My characters see it sixty times a day, so I wanted to show them in it. You rarely see the Arc de Triomphe except in American films.

But I was back with improvisation again. After *Le Petit Soldat* I said to myself: never again! So I started with a very detailed scenario: *Une Femme est une Femme*. But there was even more improvisation. On *A Bout de Souffle* I used to write the evening before shooting, on *Le Petit Soldat*, the same morning, on *Une Femme est une Femme*, at the studio while the actors were making up. Again I found that one only thinks of things one has been thinking about for a long time. One morning on *Vivre sa Vie* I thought up the 'Oval Portrait' scene,[11] but I already knew the short story. I had forgotten that when I came across it I had said to myself: I can use that. But I was at a stage where I would have thought of something: if the solution hadn't come that day, it would have the next.

With me, this is a method. As I make low-budget films, I can ask the producer for a five-week schedule, knowing there will be two weeks of actual shooting. *Vivre sa Vie* took four weeks, but shooting stopped during the whole second week. The big difficulty is that I need people who can be at my disposal the whole time. Sometimes they have to wait a whole day before I can tell them what I want them to do. I have to ask them not to leave the location in case we start shooting again. Of course they don't like it. That's why I always try to see that people who work with me are well paid. Actors don't like it for a different reason: an actor likes to feel he's in control of his character, even if it isn't true, and with me they rarely do. The terrible thing is that in the cinema it is so difficult to do what a painter does quite naturally: he stops, steps back, gets discouraged, starts again, changes something. He can please himself.

But this method is not valid for everyone. There are two main groups of directors. On one side, with Eisenstein and Hitchcock, are those who prepare their films as fully as possible. They know what they want, it's all in their heads, and they put it down on paper. The shooting is merely practical application – constructing something as similar as possible to what was imagined. Resnais is one of them; so is Demy. The others, people like Rouch, don't know exactly what they are going to do, and search for it. The film is the search. They know they are going to arrive somewhere – and they have the means to do it – but where exactly? The first make circular films; the others, films in a straight line. Renoir is one of the few who do both at the same time, and this is his charm.

Rossellini is something else again. He alone has an exact vision of the totality of things. So he films them in the only way possible. Nobody else

can film one of Rossellini's scenarios – one would have to ask questions which he himself never asks. His vision of the world is so exact that his way of seeing detail, formal or otherwise, is too. With him, a shot is beautiful because it is right; with most others, a shot becomes right because it is beautiful. They try to construct something wonderful, and if in fact it becomes so, one can see that there were reasons for doing it. Rossellini does something he had a reason for doing in the first place. It's beautiful because it is.

Beauty – the splendour of truth – has two poles. There are directors who seek the truth, which, if they find it, will necessarily be beautiful; others seek beauty, which, if they find it, will also be true. One finds these two poles in documentary and fiction. Some directors start from documentary and create fiction – like Flaherty, who eventually made very carefully constructed films. Others start from fiction and create documentary: Eisenstein, starting in montage, ended by making *Que Viva Mexico!*

The cinema is the only art which, as Cocteau says (in *Orphée*, I believe) 'films death at work'. Whoever one films is growing older and will die. So one is filming a moment of death at work. Painting is static: the cinema is interesting because it seizes life and the mortal side of life.

Cahiers: From which pole do you start?

Godard: From documentary, I think, in order to give it the truth of fiction. That is why I have always worked with good professional actors. Without them, my films would not be as good.

I am also interested in the theatrical aspect. Already in *Le Petit Soldat*, where I was trying to discover the concrete, I noticed that the closer I came to the concrete, the closer I came to the theatre. *Vivre sa Vie* is very concrete, and at the same time very theatrical. I would like to film a play by Sacha Guitry; I'd like to film *Six Characters in Search of an Author* to show through cinema what theatre is. By being realistic one discovers the theatre, and by being theatrical. . . These are the boxes of *Le Carrosse d'or*: behind the theatre there is life, and behind life, the theatre. I started from the imaginary and discovered reality; but behind reality, there is again imagination.

Cinema, Truffaut said, is spectacle – Méliès – and research – Lumière. If I analyse myself today, I see that I have always wanted, basically, to do research in the form of a spectacle. The documentary side is: a man in a particular situation. The spectacle comes when one makes this man a gangster or a secret agent. In *Une Femme est une Femme* the spectacle comes from the fact that the woman is an actress; in *Vivre sa Vie*, a prostitute.

Producers say 'Godard talks about anything he pleases, Joyce, metaphysics or painting, but he always has his commercial side.' I don't feel this at all: I see not two things, but one. The trouble with *Une Femme est une Femme* was that the producer, Ponti, thought of the film initially as Zavattini.[12] When he saw it . . .

Cahiers: How do you rate this film in your work?

Godard: Like *Jules and Jim* for Truffaut, it's my first real film. Actually I had written the scenario before *A Bout de Souffle*, but at the time it was De Broca who filmed it.[13] Of all my films, it sticks closest to the scenario. I followed it word for word, down to the last comma. I based myself on it in writing the shooting script. I read, 'She leaves the house.' I asked myself, 'What does she do, what does she see? Old people in the street. All right, that's my day's work.' My problem is brevity, never being too long. With my two-page scenarios, I am always afraid of being unable to make ninety minutes. I can well understand how people with sixty-page scenarios have problems of length.

The over-all conception of the film came from something Chaplin said: that tragedy is life in close-up, and comedy, life in long shot. I said to myself, I'm going to make a comedy in close-up: the film will be tragi-comic. Sternberg's *Jet Pilot* is also a close-up comedy. This is why it didn't go down well. *Une Femme est une Femme* didn't go down well in France either, but was well received in countries noted for their wit, like Belgium, Denmark and Holland, where it broke the box-office records set by *Guns of Navarone*.

Cahiers: Is this the film that resembles you most?

Godard: I don't think so, but it's the one I like best. It's like Preminger and *The Fan*: one loves the sickly children best. For me, the film also meant the discovery of colour and direct sound, as my other films were post-synchronized. The theme, like both my other films, is how someone extricates himself from a certain situation. But I conceived this theme within the context of a neo-realist musical. It's a complete contradiction, but this is precisely what interested me in the film. It may be an error, but it's an attractive one. And it matches the theme, which deals with a woman who wants a baby in an absurd manner whereas it is the most natural thing in the world. But the film is not a musical. It's the idea of a musical.

I hesitated a long time about doing real musical scenes. Finally, I decided to convey through the use of music the idea that the characters are singing although they are speaking normally. In any case the musical is dead. *Adieu Philippine* is a musical in a sense, but the genre itself is dead. It would be pointless even for the Americans to remake *Singin' in the Rain*. You have to do something different: my film says this too. It is nostalgia for the musical, as *Le Petit Soldat* was nostalgia for the Spanish Civil War.

What people didn't like was probably the discontinuity, the changes in rhythm, the breaks in mood. Perhaps, too, the theatrical, *cinema dell'arte* side of it. The characters perform and take their bow at the same time: they know and we know that they are acting, laughing and crying at the same time. It is an exhibition, in other words, but that is what I wanted. The characters act for the camera the whole time: it's a show. I would like one to be able to weep for Columbine, even when she's putting on a show. In *Vivre sa Vie*, on the other hand, one should feel that the characters are constantly avoiding the camera.

With *Une Femme est une Femme*, I also discovered 'Scope. I think it is the normal ratio, and 1:33 an arbitrary one. This is why I like 1:33 – because it is arbitrary. 'Scope, on the other hand, is a ratio in which you can shoot anything. 1:33 isn't, but is extraordinary. 1:66 is worthless. I don't like the intermediate ratios. I thought of using 'Scope for *Vivre sa Vie*, but didn't because it is too emotional. 1:33 is harder, more severe. I'm sorry, though, that I didn't use 'Scope for *A Bout de Souffle*. That's my only regret. *Le Petit Soldat* is correct as it is.

But one notices so many things afterwards. It's all part of the surprise. I like to be surprised. If you know in advance everything you are going to do, it isn't worth doing. If a show is all written down, what is the point of filming it? What use is cinema if it trails after literature? When I write a scenario, I too want to write it all down on paper, but I can't do it. I'm not a writer. Making a film means superimposing three operations: thinking, shooting, editing. Everything can't be in the scenario; or if it is, and people laugh or cry while reading it, then why not just print it and sell it in bookshops.

The advantage for me is that I never have scripts languishing at home undone. But the trouble is that when you're signing with a producer, he wonders what he's getting. So do I. A producer likes to hire a director about whom he feels that the finished film will be something like the original concept.

Cahiers: Has this difference of viewpoint led you to turn down projects?

Godard: The Hakims[14] asked me to do *Eva*. To begin with, I didn't like the actors they had in mind. I wanted Richard Burton. They agreed in theory. They said, 'We'll call him.' I said, 'There's the telephone.' 'Yes, well, it's awkward . . . he may not be at home.' So I knew they didn't want him. The woman I saw as someone like the Rita Hayworth of five or six years ago. At all events, the actors had to be American. Film people are pointless if they aren't American. What does it mean if a Frenchman says 'I'm a scriptwriter' – no such creature exists. Whereas it doesn't matter with an American if it doesn't exist: things American have a mythical element which creates their own existence.

Eva bothered me, too, because I thought it too like *La Chienne*.[15] And it had no theme. However, I suggested the following: the story of a man who is asked by a producer to write a script about a woman in order to see if he really can write. This becomes the story of a man who tries to write about a woman, but can't. Or maybe he can, I don't know. In any case, that was the story to be told. I wanted to show the poem he writes, and to analyse the poem. He writes, for instance, 'I went out, it was fine, I met her, she had blue eyes', and then wonders why he wrote this. In the end I think he gets nowhere . . . it's a bit like the story of the death of Porthos.[16]

The producers didn't like it. The Hakims aren't stupid, but like all prewar producers, they no longer know what to do. In those days a producer used to know the kind of films he should make. There were three or four directions, and each producer kept to his own. Braunberger[17] was already

at work, following his private path. Today there are thousands of different directions. Braunberger, still following his own little path, isn't lost; neither are the people who have gone on making *Ben-Hurs*. But 90 per cent of the producers are completely adrift. They used to be able to say, 'I'm going to make a Duvivier film.' But now? They can't bring off either big commercial films or small art-house ones. Everything is all mixed up. Even the big companies aren't big enough really to know what to do.

So they say, 'What about Antonioni? Two hundred thousand people paid to see *La Notte*. Let's make a film with him.' They are doomed, because they have really no idea what they're doing. Losey and Antonioni,[18] inopportunely employed like this, pay no dividends. These people, after forty years in a certain kind of cinema, are incapable of adapting themselves. In my contract with the Hakims, it specified that if they saw fit they could re-edit to suit themselves. I was appalled. 'Duvivier, Carné, everybody has contracts like this', they told me.

They no longer know. Audiences baffle them too. They used not to know that they knew nothing. Now they do. But one must not be too hard on producers: the real villains are the exhibitors and distributors. At heart producers are like us – people who don't have money and want to make films. They are on the same side as we are, they want to work without interference, and like us they are against censorship. Distributors and exhibitors have no love for what they do; but I have never met a producer who didn't love his profession. Compared to an exhibitor, the worst of producers is a poet. Crazy, stubborn, half-witted, innocent or stupid, they are kindred spirits. They chance their money on things with no idea how they will turn out, often just because they want to. A producer is often someone who buys a book and suddenly decides to set it up in production. It may or may not make money, but he has to go ahead anyway. The trouble most of the time is that, having no taste, he buys bad books. But he is an entertainment contractor, a showman, so whatever else he's a kindred spirit. And he works. A producer does more work than a distributor, and a distributor more than an exhibitor. Distributors and exhibitors are like civil servants, that's what is so terrible; but producers – independent and free – belong with the artists. The civil servant ideal is that every day at the same time the same film should attract the same number of spectators. They have no idea what cinema is all about: it's the exact opposite of everything they stand for.

The public is neither stupid nor intelligent. No one knows what it is. Sometimes it surprises, usually it disappoints. One can't count on it. In one way this is a good thing. In any case it is changing. The old average cinema audience has become the television audience. The cinema audience has divided into two: those who go at the week-end, and those who seek films out. When producers talk to me about audiences, I tell them, 'I know what they're like because I go to all sorts of cinemas and I pay for my seat; you never go anywhere, you don't know what's happening.'

Like *Les Quatre cents coups*, *A Bout de Souffle* was a misunderstanding: through a concatenation of circumstances, it became much too successful. Today, *A Bout de Souffle* would do less well. Success depends on thousands of things, and you can't know everything. *Une Femme est une Femme* was a misunderstanding too, but the other way round, and this time one can see why: it was the distributor's fault. He sold the film as a sort of Hunebelle thing,[19] so when the exhibitors eventually saw what they had got, they were furious. Now when the film is shown it is labelled 'specialized film', etc., and it does better. *Vivre sa Vie*, on the other hand, posed no such problems.

Cahiers: All right, let's talk about *Vivre sa Vie*. Was it difficult or easy to make?

Godard: It was both very simple and . . . it was as if I had to snatch the shots out of the night, as if they were at the bottom of a well and had to be brought to light. When I pulled out a shot, I said to myself, 'Everything is there, no changes'; but there had to be no mistakes about what came out, and came out at the first try. I didn't want elegant effects, I wasn't looking for any particular effects: I had to take a chance. *Une Femme est une Femme* was different, as I *was* looking for particular things – the theatrical element, for instance. I caught the same element in *Vivre sa Vie*, but without telling myself I must do such and such to get it. I knew I would get it, however. *Théâtre-vérité*, one might call it.

This way of getting shots meant there was no editing. All I had to do was put the shots end to end. What the crew saw at the rushes is more or less what the public sees. Moreover, I had shot the scenes in sequence. There was no mixing either. The film is a series of blocks. You just take them and set them side by side. The important thing is to choose the correct ones at first go. Ideally, I wanted to get what I needed right away, without retakes. If retakes were necessary, it was no good. The impromptu means chance. It is also definitive. What I wanted was to be definitive by chance.

I obtained a theatrical realism. The theatre is also a block which can't be retouched. Realism, anyway, is never exactly the same as reality, and in the cinema it is of necessity faked. I also converge with the theatre through language: in my film one must listen to people speaking, particularly as their backs are often turned so that one is not distracted by their faces. The soundtrack is as realistic as possible. It reminds me of the first talkies, which I have always liked: they have a very real truth because it was the first time one could hear people talking.

Broadly speaking, the cinema is returning to greater authenticity in dialogue and soundtrack. People have seized on this to accuse us of vulgarity. In *Un Singe en Hiver*,[20] you can hear the word 'shit' dozens of times; in *Les Bonnes Femmes*, only once or twice; but it is the latter which gets called vulgar, because Audiard sticks to convention. In real life, if a girl says to a boy, 'You silly sod, I hate you!' that hurts. So it should hurt just as much in the cinema. This is what people can't accept; why they balked at *Les Bonnes*

'. . . to film a thought in action': Anna Karina and Sady Rebbot in *Vivre sa Vie*

Femmes, which is true and exact but which offended them. This really was a case of an audience looking at itself in a mirror.

Cahiers: When you made *Vivre sa Vie*, what was your point of departure?

Godard: I didn't know exactly what I was going to do. I prefer to look for something I don't know, rather than be able to do better with something I do know. In fact I made the film right off the bat, as if carried along, like an article written at one go. *Vivre sa Vie* had the kind of equilibrium which means that you suddenly feel good about life for an hour, or a day, or a week. Anna, who accounts for 60 per cent of the film, was a little unhappy because she never really knew beforehand what she would have to do. But she was so sincere in her desire to do something that finally it's this sincerity which comes through. For my part, without really knowing what I was going to do, I was so sincere in my desire to make the film that between us we brought it off. We found at the end what we had put into it at the beginning. I like using different actors; but working with her is different. I think this was the first time she became fully aware of her talent and used it. The interview scene in *Le Petit Soldat*, for instance, was done Rouch style: she didn't know in advance what questions I would ask her. Here she acted her lines as if she

didn't know what the questions would be. Ultimately the result is just as spontaneous and natural.

The film was made by a sort of second presence, and Anna was not alone in giving the best of herself. Coutard brought off his best camerawork. What astonishes me on seeing the film again is that it seems to be the most carefully composed of all my films, whereas it certainly wasn't. I took the raw material – perfectly rounded pebbles which I placed side by side – and it organized itself. Also – I only realize this now – I am usually very careful about colours, even in black and white. But not here: anything black was black, anything white was white. The cast wore their own everyday clothes, except Anna, for whom we bought a skirt and sweater.

Cahiers: Why the division into twelve tableaux?

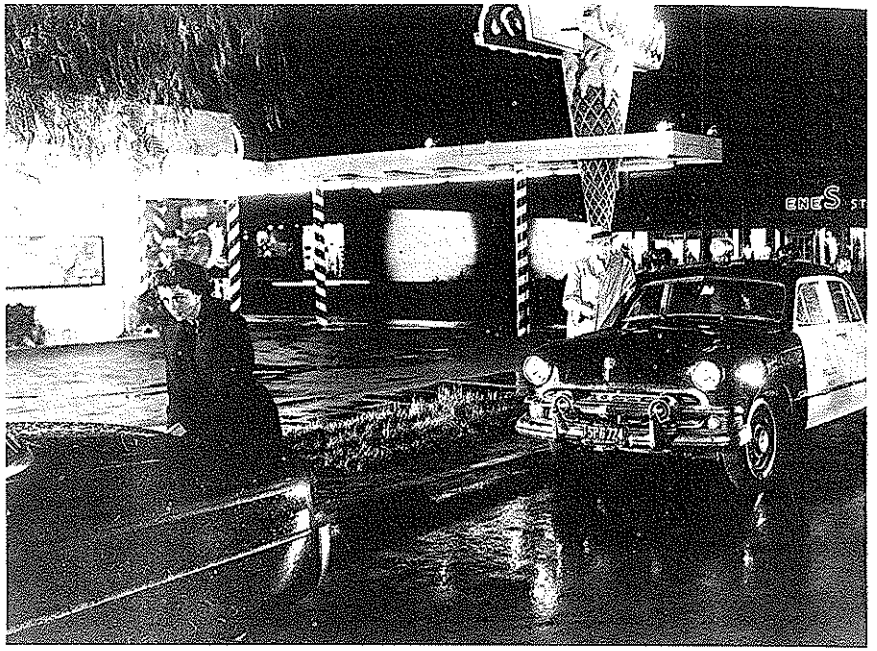
Godard: Why twelve, I don't know; but in tableaux to emphasize the theatrical, Brechtian side. I wanted to show the 'Adventures of Nana So-and-so' side of it. The end of the film is very theatrical too: the final tableau had to be even more so than the rest. Besides, this division corresponds to the external view of things which would best allow me to convey the feeling of what was going on inside – unlike *Pickpocket*, which is seen from the inside. How can one render the inside? Precisely by staying prudently outside.

The greatest tableaux are portraits. Velazquez, for instance. A painter who tries to render a face only renders the outside of people; and yet something else is revealed. It's very mysterious. It's an adventure. The film was an intellectual adventure: I wanted to try to film a thought in action – but how do you do it? We still don't know.

In any case, something is revealed. This is why Antonioni's cinema of non-communication isn't mine. Rossellini told me that I almost fell into the Antonioni error, but just escaped. I believe sincerity is sufficient when one has this kind of problem. I think it is wrong to say that the more you look at someone the less you understand. Obviously, though, if you look too much you inevitably end by wondering what the point is. If you look at a wall for ten hours on end, you begin to ask questions about the wall, and yet it's just a wall. You create useless problems. This, too, is why the film is a series of sketches: one must let people live their lives, not look too long at them, otherwise one ends by no longer understanding anything.

Cahiers: Your projects include *Les Carabiniers*. Are you going to make it in colour?[21]

Godard: Yes, but what sort of colour? I don't really care. I'd be happy if it looked like Buñuel's *Robinson Crusoe* or Rossellini's *Joan of Arc*. And I shall make it in 16 mm. When blown up to 35 mm, it will look a little washed out, but I don't see that it matters. Maybe it will even be better that way. Shooting in 16 mm matches the spirit of the film. The big Mitchell is a quite different affair. For *Vivre sa Vie* I insisted on a heavy camera – if there were a bigger one than the Mitchell, I'd have used it. I like the look of the Mitchell – it really looks like a camera. I was very unhappy with my sketch *La*



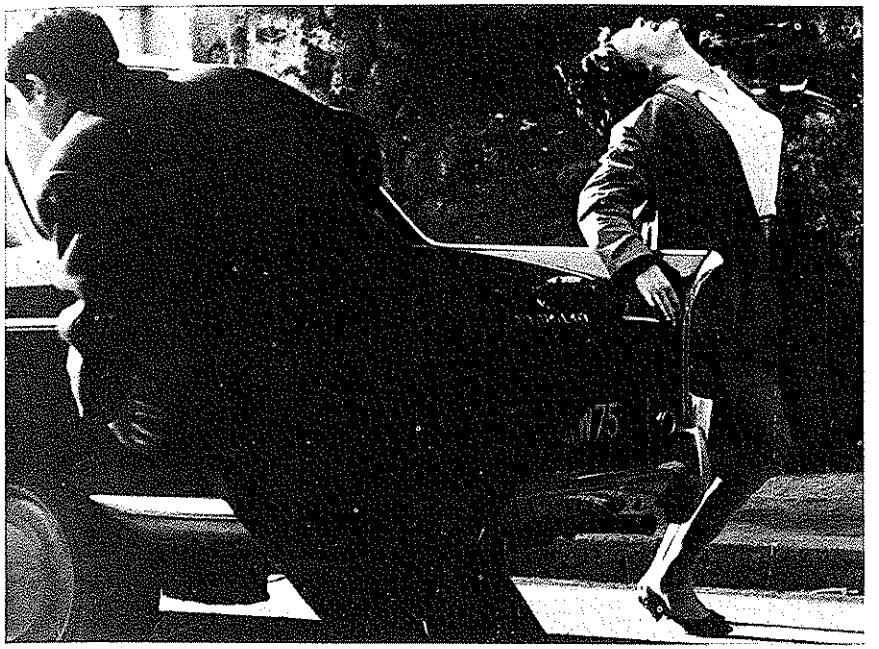
Dorothy Malone in *Pushover*

Paresse, because the producer stuck everybody with a Debrie. This is a square camera which doesn't have the feel of a camera at all. It may be silly, but I attach a great deal of importance to these things.

In the same way, shooting hand-held and with a tripod gives two very different styles. I wouldn't like to do a fix-focus shot with a Cameflex, even on a stand. A Cameflex is made for movement, and immobile it is a sad thing. With it you can't get a real fix-focus: there is a sort of vibration in the immobility. A Mitchell really does the trick though.

I'm also going to do a sketch.[22] A man goes out into the street, everything seems normal, but two or three tiny details reveal that people, including his fiancée, no longer reason normally. He discovers, for instance, that a café is no longer called a café. And when his fiancée fails to turn up at a rendezvous, it's not because she doesn't love him any more, but simply because she's reasoning differently. They no longer share the same logic. One day he opens a newspaper and sees that there has been an atomic explosion somewhere, and realizes that he is probably the only person reasoning normally in the world. Things are the same, but different. It's anti-Rossellini, but there it is.

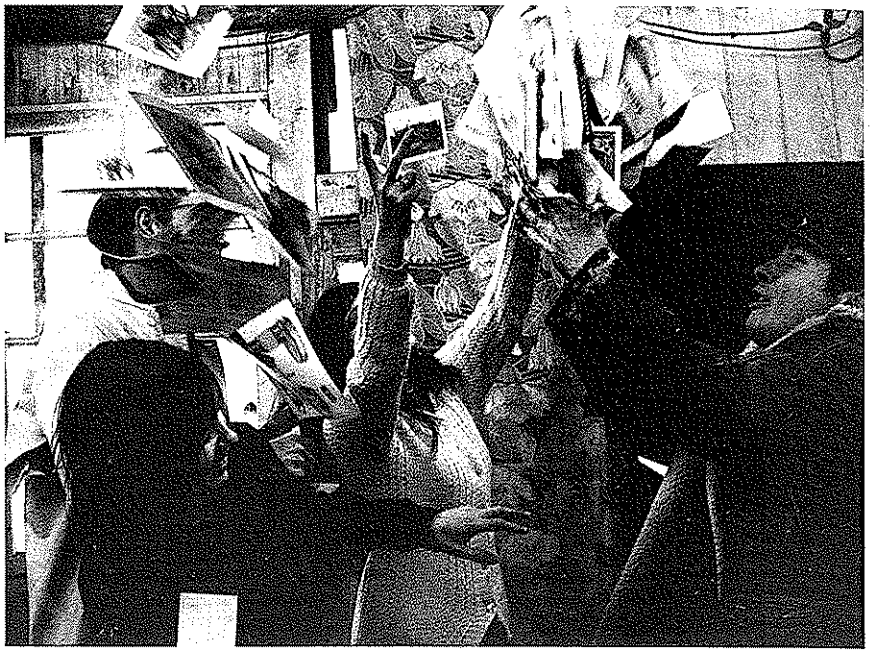
Les Carabiniers is more like the old Rossellini of *La Macchina Ammazzacattivi* and *Dov'è la liberta?* The scenario is so good that all I need do is film it without worrying. The solutions will come of their own accord. It's



Vivre sa Vie: the death of Nana

the story of two peasants who are visited by policemen, come not to arrest them but to bring a letter from the king. In fact it is a mobilization order. They are fed up, but the policemen tell them that 'War is wonderful, you can do anything, take anything.' What sort of things, they want to know. Can we leave without paying in a restaurant? Of course! They continue to ask questions, listing everything from petty theft to terrible atrocities. Can we kill children? Of course! Steal old men's watches? Certainly! Break spectacles? That too! Burn women? Naturally! When the catalogue is over, they go off to war. The film will be vicious, because each time their stupidity gives birth to an idea, it's a vicious one.

They write to their wives and describe the war: 'We have captured the Arc de Triomphe, the Lido, the Pyramids, raped lots of women and burned things. Everything is fine.' At the end they come back, happy but crippled, with a little suitcase: 'We've brought back the treasures of the world.' And they take out piles of postcards representing monuments from various countries: to them, these are like title-deeds, and they believe that once the war is over they will be given the lot. The policemen say: 'When you hear shouting and fireworks in the valley, that will mean the war is over and the king is coming to reward everyone; go along and you'll get everything.' A little while later they hear cries and explosions, they hurry along, but find



Les Carabiniers: 'We've brought back the treasures of the world'

shooting going on (in scenes recalling the Liberation). The king has not won the war: he has signed a peace treaty with the enemy, and those who fought for him are considered as war criminals. Instead of collecting their spoils, the two peasants are shot. It will all be very realistic, but seen from a purely theatrical perspective, with war scenes, commando-style as in Fuller's films, and some newsreel footage. But now that I have described it all, I suddenly feel less need to make it.

Cahiers: You also want to make *Ubu Roi*?[23]

Godard: Yes, in much the same style. Ubu in the cinema should be very much the gangster – soft hat and raincoat – getting into cars with his gang and going to cafés. When he says his 'Merdre!', it must ring some kind of bell: it should be spoken in the tone of 'Merdre! I've missed my train'; with the dialogue very neutral in the Bresson manner.

What bothers me is that the Ubu flavour has already been caught in *Tirez sur le pianiste*, where the realistic aspect is brilliantly done, and the dialogue too is very fine. From this point of view the film is extraordinary.

I am also going to film Giraudoux's *Pour Lucrèce*.[24] There I shall be faced with pure theatre, because I simply want to record a text, record voices speaking it. I should also like to do a huge film about France, to include everything and run for two or three days. It would be in episodes, and each

episode could be shown for one or two weeks. If you rented a cinema for a year, it could be done. Everything is feasible. To show everything has always been the temptation for writers in their vast novels. I would show people going to the cinema, and you would see the film they are seeing. Three days later, at the theatre, you would see the play they are watching. You would see someone whose job was interviewing people, and you would see his interviews. One could question everybody, from Sartre to the Minister for War, from workmen to the peasants of Cantal. There would also be sport: racing, athletics, etc. One would have to organize the basic principle, then go off in all directions. Shooting would take two or three years.

Cahiers: Do you like television?

Godard: Television means the State, the State means civil servants, and civil servants mean . . . the exact opposite of television. What it ought to be, I mean. But I would like to do some: not make films *for* television, which at present one can just as well make for the cinema, but reportage for instance. For beginners, television should be a testing-ground; for those who have already arrived, it should be a diversion.

I would like to do essays, interviews or travel programmes; talk about a painter or a writer I admire. Or simply do plays. But they must be live, because if you have to film a play, you might as well make a film. If the film happens to be shown on TV, well, that's all right. Television is not a means of expression. This is proved by the fact that the sillier it is, the more fascinating it becomes and the more people are glued to their chairs. That's television, but one can hope for a change. The bore is that if you start watching TV, you can't stop. The solution is not to watch at all.

So it should not be regarded as a means of expression but of transmission, and it should be used as such. If this is the only means of talking about art to people, it must be used. Even with films like *Lola Montès* or *Alexander Nevsky*, something comes through on television, despite the distortion, the rounded screen, the lack of definition, the absence of colour. The essence remains. With *Lola Montès*, what you lost visually you often gained by having your attention focused on the dialogue. The film held purely through its dialogue, and so the essence came over. This happens with all good films: if only part of the film survives, it will be enough to bring it across. So – and this is important – television does transmit something of the essence of things, assuming of course they have any essence to transmit.

The curious thing is that *Nevsky*, with its reliance on composition and framing, came over very well in spite of the usual butchery, whereas Jean Prat's television version of *The Persians*, based within its own limits on the same principle, did not come off at all. One *felt* that *Nevsky* was beautiful. One's first preoccupation in doing television drama should not be with visual elegance and striking photography. With an interview, on the other hand, it can be interesting suddenly to show how striking the subject is, or what he is saying.

There should also be travel films. Rossellini's film about India came over brilliantly. If someone is going off somewhere, you would say, 'We'll send a couple of people along, and you make them do anything you like.' You need go no further than Marseille! And the news programmes could be extraordinary. *Cinq colonnes à la une*[25] seems brilliant, but only by comparison with the rest. Why shouldn't there be faked newsreels, like Méliès used to do? Today one could have Castro and Kennedy, played by actors: 'This is the sad story of Castro and Kennedy!' You could mix in real newsreels, and I'm sure people would love it. Of course in France things like that would likely smack more of cabaret than of *The Threepenny Opera*. You have to be serious. Brecht is serious. But Brecht doesn't go down well in France. In France, everything is compartmentalized. There is comedy, and there is tragedy. The tragedy is that Shakespeare is both at once – and Shakespeare does not go down well in France. And in comedy, there is drawing-room and cabaret, which mustn't mix either.

And news stories? They should be seen just as they appear in *France-Soir*. That's what news is. The only remarkable things one ever sees in the genre are reconstructions of crimes. These really are news stories; and the element of reconstruction is fascinating. Generally speaking, reportage is interesting only when placed in a fictional context, but fiction is interesting only if it is validated by a documentary context.

The Nouvelle Vague, in fact, may be defined in part by this new relationship between fiction and reality, as well as through nostalgic regret for a cinema which no longer exists. When we were at last able to make films, we could no longer make the kind of films which had made us want to make films. The dream of the Nouvelle Vague – which will never come about – is to make *Spartacus* in Hollywood on a ten million dollar budget. It doesn't bother me having to make small, inexpensive films, but people like Demy don't like it a bit.

Everyone has always thought the Nouvelle Vague stood for small budgets against big ones, but it isn't so: simply for good films of any kind against bad ones. But small budgets proved to be the only way we could make films. Certainly some films are all the better for being made cheaply; but then think of the films that are all the better because money has been spent on them.

Cahiers: Suppose you had been asked to make *Vivre sa Vie* on a hundred million franc budget?

Godard: I would never have accepted. What good would it have done the film? The only advantage would have been that I could have paid people more for working for me. In the same way, I refuse to make a film for a hundred million when I would need four hundred. People are beginning to offer me expensive films: 'Don't waste your time on those trifles. Come and adapt this book, make a real film, with so-and-so as star. We'll give you three hundred million.' Trouble is, it would take four hundred.

Certainly it's pleasant working American super-production style, shooting one set-up per day – especially as this is precisely how I work anyway. Like me, they take time off to think, only there it's done in the front office. So many lights and armchairs for stars have to be moved when setting up a scene that the director has nothing else to do but think during the removals. But there they have other problems: as soon as a film costs three or four hundred million, it becomes a producer's film, and he won't give you your head. Even if the film is made knowing it will lose money (as Bronston made *El Cid* and *55 Days at Peking* with money blocked in Spain), the producer watches you, because he doesn't want to lose his money any old how.

Actually, it is only in France that the producer recognizes – in principle, at least – the idea of an *auteur*. (Hitchcock is an exception: when other directors were finally getting their names in lights, *he* got a picture of himself.) Even the best Italian producers consider the director to be an employee. The difference is that the Italian industry is pretty worthless, whereas the Americans are pretty good – less so, perhaps, since the disappearance of the studio system, but until then they were the best in the world. American scriptwriters, too, simply dwarf even the better French writers. Ben Hecht is the best scriptwriter I have ever seen. In his book *The Producer*, it is extraordinary to see how Richard Brooks manages to construct a very fine, coherent script based on the Red Sea story which had been suggested to him. The Americans, who are much more stupid when it comes to analysis, instinctively bring off very complex scripts. They also have a gift for the kind of simplicity which brings depth – in a little Western like *Ride the High Country*, for instance. If one tries to do something like that in France, one looks like an intellectual.

The Americans are real and natural. But this attitude means something over there. We in France must find something that means something – find the French attitude as they have found the American attitude. To do so, one must begin by talking about things one knows. We have been accused of talking about certain subjects only, but we talk about things we know, looking for something which reflects us. Before us, the only person who really tried to see France was Jacques Becker, and he did so by filming fashion houses and gangsters. The others never filmed reality. All those reproaches aimed at us should have been directed against them, because their cinema was completely unreal. They were completely cut off: the cinema was one thing, life another. They didn't live their cinema. I once saw Delannoy going into the Billancourt studios, briefcase in hand: you would have sworn he was going into an insurance office.

Cahiers: So we come back to the idea of departmentalizing.

Godard: France is made up of departments. But in any means of expression everything is connected and all means of expression are connected. And life itself is one of them. For me, making films and not making films are not two different ways of life. Filming should be a part of living, something normal and natural. Making films hasn't changed my life very much, because

I made them before by writing criticism, and if I had to return to criticism, it would be a way of going on making films. It is true that things are different depending on whether you do or do not like preparing your films. If you need to prepare, then you have to prepare very carefully, and the danger is that the cinema may become detached and exclusive.

The only interesting film Clouzot has made is one in which he was seeking, improvising, experimenting, one in which he lived something: *Le Mystère Picasso*. Clément and the rest never live their cinema. It is a separate compartment, itself divided into compartments.

In France, as I have already said, one can't mix genres. In America, a thriller can also be political and include gags. Because it is American, this is acceptable here at a pinch, but try the same thing with things French, and they howl. This is why a French thriller never tells you anything about France. Of course this mental departmentalizing also corresponds to a departmentalization of social truths.

One mustn't mix the genres, but one mustn't mix people either. They must be kept separate. It's very difficult for someone who wants to mix things and different social milieux.

The Nouvelle Vague was honest in that it did well what it knew instead of doing badly what it didn't know or mixing up everything it knew. Talk about the workers? I would be glad to, but I don't know them well enough. I would love to film Vailland's *325,000 francs*, but it's a difficult subject and I'd be afraid to. What are they waiting for, the people who *do* know? The first time I heard a workman speak in the cinema was in *Chronique d'un été*. Rouch apart, none of the people who have done films about workers have had any talent. Naturally their workmen were phoney.

Nowadays, it is true, there are fewer complaints, because people have realized that we are beginning to deal with other things besides wild parties. Only Vadim has done nothing else, and nobody reproaches him for it. Vadim is the dregs. He has betrayed everything he could betray, himself included. It's the betrayal of the hireling. Today, for the powers-that-be, he is perfectly integrated morally and economically, and that is why people like him. He has the support of the Government because he is very right-thinking: in the area of eroticism and family entertainment he has no equal. The public loves it: Vadim is easy to take. And this is why he is inexcusable: he gives people the impression that they are getting Shakespeare when he offers them *Confidential* and *True Romance*. They say, 'You mean that's Shakespeare? But it's wonderful – why weren't we told before?'

I don't believe one can know one is doing something stupid or harmful and still go on doing it. Vadim probably isn't aware of what he is doing, and thinks he is making good films. At the beginning, when he was spontaneous and sincere, he wasn't aware either: he just happened to be there at the right moment. The fact that he was there at the right moment, when everyone else was lagging behind, gave the impression that he was out in front. Since then he has been marking time, while everyone else came up to date. So

now he is lagging. Being also very resourceful by nature, he followed the track beaten by those directors who were ambitious and up-and-coming during the Occupation; he has taken their place exactly – and they were already beginning to date twenty years ago. It all happened like the ministerial changes under the Fourth Republic. He carried on the craft.

Having a craft is something which has always been important in France. Before the war, the film director was not comparable to a musician or a writer, but to a carpenter, a craftsman. It so happened that among the craftsmen there were artists like Renoir and Ophuls. Today the director is considered as an artist, but most of them are still craftsmen. They work in the cinema as one does in a skilled trade. Craftsmanship does exist, but not as they see it. Carné is a craftsman, and his craft makes him make bad films. To begin with, when he was creating his craft, he made brilliant films: now he creates no longer. Today Chabrol has more craft than Carné, and his craft serves for exploration. It is a worthy craft.

Cahiers: Does the Nouvelle Vague – in criticism and in film-making – have in common this will to explore?

Godard: We have many things in common. Of course I am different from Rivette, Rohmer or Truffaut, but in general we share the same ideas about the cinema, we like more or less the same novels, paintings and films. We have more things in common than not, and the differences are big about small things, small about big things. Even if they weren't, the fact that we were all critics accustomed us to seeing affinities rather than differences.

We don't all make the same films, of course, but the more so-called 'normal' films I see, the more I am struck by the difference between them and our own. It must be a big difference, because I usually tend to see the affinities between things. Before the war, there was a difference between, for instance, Duvivier's *La Belle Equipe* and Renoir's *La Bête humaine*, but only one of quality. Whereas now, there is a real difference in kind between our films and those of Verneuil, Delannoy, Duvivier or Carné.

Much the same is true of criticism: *Cahiers* has kept a style of its own, but this hasn't prevented it from going downhill. Why? Whose fault is it? I think it is due chiefly to the fact that there is no longer any position to defend. There used always to be something to say. Now that everyone is agreed, there isn't so much to say. The thing that made *Cahiers* was its position in the front line of battle.

There were two kinds of values: true and false. *Cahiers* came along saying that the true were false and the false were true. Today there is neither true nor false, and everything has become much more difficult. The *Cahiers* critics were commandos. Today they are an army in peacetime, going out on manœuvres from time to time. I think this is a passing phase. For the moment, as with all armies in peacetime, *Cahiers* is divided into clans, but this happens with all critics, particularly young ones. It has reached the same stage as Protestantism did when it divided into an incredible number

of sects and chapels. Directors' names are bandied about because everyone has his own favourite and is necessarily obliged to detest everyone else's.

Other things baffle me too. *Cahiers* is enormously influential abroad. But – and everyone agrees about this – when one goes abroad one meets people who say, 'Do you really think Freda[26] is important?' It was difficult enough getting them to see that people like Ray and Aldrich had genius, but when they find interviews with directors like Ulmer, they give up. I am for the *politique des auteurs*, but not just anybody. Opening the door to absolutely everyone is very dangerous. Inflation threatens.

The important thing is not to *have* to discover someone. Leave the smart game of finding new names to *L'Express*.[27] The important thing is to know how to distinguish between the talented and the untalented, and if possible to define the talent, to analyse it. There are very few who try.

Of course, everything has become very difficult for critics now, and we also had many of the same faults *Cahiers* now suffers from. But at least we have in common that we are searching: those who do not seek will not long delude, for things always become clear in the end.

94: The Ten Best Films of 1962

1. *Hatari!* (Howard Hawks)
2. *Vanina Vanini* (Roberto Rossellini)
3. *Through a Glass, Darkly* (Ingmar Bergman)
4. *Jules et Jim* (François Truffaut)
5. *Le Signe du Lion* (Eric Rohmer)
6. *Vivre sa Vie* (Jean-Luc Godard)
7. *The Flaming Years* (Alexander Dovzhenko)
8. *Sweet Bird of Youth* (Richard Brooks)
9. *Une Grosse Tête* (Claude de Givray)
10. *Ride the High Country* [*G.B.*: *Guns in the Afternoon*] (Sam Peckinpah)

95: *Les Carabiniers* under Fire

Télé 7 Jours (anonymous): 'This botched film, which its director has the effrontery to dedicate to Jean Vigo.'

Godard: 'This confused, incoherent, wilfully absurd, long, boring, commercially worthless film' (excerpt from a review by the Agence d'Informations Cinématographiques after the opening of *L'Atalante*[1] at the Colisée).

Le Figaro Littéraire (Claude Mauriac): 'As for the horrors of war, you will find them evoked here not only clumsily but with offensive crudity. Jean-Luc Godard has not hesitated to provide his film with an authentic counterpoint by including newsreels shot by war correspondents at the risk of their lives. Caricature does not become satire as he had hoped: our laughter freezes. Poor dead, the real dead of youthful sacrifice and hopes destroyed, rewarded by being pressed as unhappy extras into this pitiful farce.'

Godard: I consider these lines as praise indeed. But as they were manifestly not written with that intention, there is obviously a misunderstanding

Catherine Ribéro in *Les Carabiniers* and Catherine Hessling in Renoir's *Nana*

somewhere. In dealing with war, I followed a very simple rule. I assumed I had to explain to children not only what war is, but what all wars have been from the barbarian invasions to Korea and Algeria by way of Fontenoy, Trafalgar and Gettysburg. For example, the first shots of war are, in order: a battleship, Ulysses and Michelangelo, an aircraft. Why? Because there is an army of the sea, the earth and the air. Why in this order? To convey the idea that Ulysses and Michelangelo – these regimental inflations, as Céline puts it – are already surrounded. So each shot, each sequence, corresponds to a particular idea: the Occupation, the Russian campaign, the regular army, partisans, and so on . . . or a particular feeling: violence, confusion, indifference, derision, disorder, surprise, desolation. Or a particular face, a particular phenomenon: noise, silence, etc. In other words, rather as if I were illustrating the many – yet always drearily familiar – faces of war by projecting *imagerie* sheets through a magic lantern, in the manner of the early cameramen who used to fabricate newsreels.

The misunderstanding, I think, arises simply because I filmed war objectively at all levels, conscience included. But conscience is always subjective to a greater or lesser degree. (Even when treated as an object by Bresson, it always remains an object whose characteristic is precisely its subjectivity.) And all films, particularly war films, have always banked on this. This explains why the same newsreel shot of a dead man upsets the

spectator in *Carabiniers* and delights him in *Mourir à Madrid*.[2] It upsets because it is what it is – insignificant – without significance, that is; whereas in *Mourir à Madrid* it is given a significance, a life maybe similar, maybe different, from its own. This is what I call cheating – even if the intention is pure – because making a documentary compilation does not mean stealing the life which sleeps in the archive vaults; it means stripping reality of its appearances to restore the raw reality which is sufficient unto itself – at the same time seeking the moment when they end. Filming, therefore, is simply seizing an event as a sign, and seizing it at the precise second when, gently (a scene from *Lola*), brutally (a shot by Fuller), cunningly (a composition by Buñuel), logically (a sequence from *Voyage to Italy*), the significance springs freely from the sign which conditions and prefigures it.

The problem is not only one of honesty, but also of intelligence. In *Carabiniers*, having treated as an improvised farce something for which so many men died, it seems to me that the film fulfils the basic requirements of decency. Take concentration camps, for instance. The only real film to be made about them – which has never been made because it would be intolerable – would be if a camp were filmed from the point of view of the torturers and their daily routine. How to get a human body measuring two metres into a coffin measuring fifty centimetres? How to load ten tons of arms and legs on to a three-ton lorry? How to burn a hundred women with petrol enough for ten? One would also have secretaries making lists of everything on their typewriters. The really horrible thing about such scenes would not be their horror but their very ordinary everydayness.[3]

La Croix (Jean Rochereau): 'Scenes shot at random, edited any old how, stuffed with continuity errors.'

Godard: We had a four-week schedule during a winter which inspired its own rigour, and everything, from script to mixing, was done under the same aegis. The soundtrack, in particular, was especially carefully prepared, thanks to the sound engineers Hortion and Maumont. Each gunshot and explosion was recorded separately, then mixed even though it would have been easy to buy them from Zanuck.[4] Each aircraft is accompanied by the sound of its own engine, and we never had a Heinkel roar for a Spitfire, nor a Beretta rattle when what you see is a Thompson sub-machine-gun. The editing took longer even than for *A Bout de Souffle*, and the sound mixing resembled that of Resnais and Bresson. The music was recorded by the very respectable Schola Cantorum.[5] As for continuity errors, there is one – proud, moving, Eisensteinian – in a scene where the shots are modelled directly on *Potemkin*. In a long shot, an N.C.O. in the royal army takes off a partisan girl's cap, revealing hair as blonde as the wheat in her *kolkhoz*. Then, in the next shot, a close-up, the same gesture is repeated. So what? What is continuity but the passage from one shot to another? The passage can be made smoothly – and this is the continuity perfected more or less over forty years by the American cinema and its editors, who in everything

from thrillers to comedies, and from comedies to Westerns, have established and refined the principle of continuity on the same gesture, the same position, so as not to break the rhythmic unity of a scene; a purely textbook continuity, therefore, a stylistic trick. But you can also cut from one shot to another, for dramatic rather than stylistic reasons, and this is Eisenstein's continuity, contrasting one form with another and in the same operation binding them indissolubly together. So the passage from medium shot to close-up becomes the passage from major to minor in music, for instance, or vice versa. Continuity, in other words, is a sort of rhyme, and there is no need to fight the battle of *Hernani*[6] all over again looking for hidden traps. All you need to know is when, where, why and how.

Carrefour (Michel Mohrt): 'A proof of this incapacity to make us see is the reliance on written texts – texts of pitiful inadequacy.'

Paris-Presse (Michel Aubriant): 'Not to mention the wilful mystification. The director sidesteps difficult scenes by intercutting his story, or rather anti-story, with written titles resuming what he either lacked the courage or the inclination to shoot.'

Minute (Le Serpent): 'After all his vilification of the commercial cinema, here he is employing hoary old silent-cinema techniques: between two scenes, a sentence scribbled on a black card is supposed to carry the action forward. Here is a full admission of technical incompetence by the Nouvelle Vague.'

Godard: Ulysses and Michelangelo write from the front to their wife and sister. The texts of their letters are copied word for word from letters by soldiers in the siege of Stalingrad, from a letter by one of Napoleon's hussars in the Spanish campaign, and also from circulars by Himmler to his various chiefs of staff, as cited in Jacques Delarue's recent *Histoire de la Gestapo*. Further sentences were taken from documents published by *France-Observateur* and *L'Express* relating to correspondence by the Lacheroy-Argoud-Godard (I can't help that) team in their days of glory. Most of these texts are of terrible inadequacy – distressingly, depressingly cruel.

L'Humanité (Armand Monjo): 'These Hitlerians scribble 'HUMA'[7] in chalk on a building which they requisition after executing the concierge.'

Godard: Before executing the concierge, Ulysses writes his initials and those of his brother Michelangelo on the wall of a building he requisitions, with the whole preceded by two little crosses, one for each of them, making the royal emblem: so –++U.MA.

France-Observateur (Robert Benayoun): 'Godard wallows in his own mire by using over-exposed photography.'

Paris-Presse (Michel Aubriant): 'He takes it upon himself to exalt lousy photography into a system.'

Candide (anonymous): 'A film shot wild, where each image reveals the director's supreme contempt for the audience.'

L'Express (Michel Cournot): 'A badly made, badly lit, badly everything film.'

Godard: *Les Carabiniers* was shot with Kodak XX negative, which is currently the best stock on the market for density, as sensitive as the old Plus X, as fast as the old TRI X and with better definition: it is, in short, the best all-round stock, acceptable to both Richard Leacock and Russell Metty, the one which can 'take it', as technicians say when demonstrating its range. This negative was developed with infinite precision by the G.T.C. laboratories at Joinville – the cradle of cinematography – under the direction of M. Mauvoisin, who a few years before was the first to put a special bath at our disposal for treating the Ilford HPS of *A Bout de Souffle* and the Agfa Rekord of *Le Petit Soldat*. The positive prints were simply made on a special Kodak high contrast stock. This treatment was necessary to obtain, rightly or wrongly, the same photographic quality as the early Chaplin films, with the black and white contrasts of the old orthochromatic stock. Several shots, intrinsically too grey, were duped again sometimes two or three times, always to their highest contrast, to make them match the newsreel shots, which had themselves been duped more than usual. As for Coutard, after five films with me, he has already won his third Grand Prix for photography.

96: *Le Mépris*

Moravia's novel is a nice, vulgar one for a train journey, full of classical, old-fashioned sentiments in spite of the modernity of the situations. But it is with this kind of novel that one can often make the best films.

I have stuck to the main theme, simply altering a few details,[1] on the principle that something filmed is automatically different from something written, and therefore original. There was no need to try to make it different, to adapt it to the screen. All I had to do was film it as it is: just film what was written, apart from a few details, for if the cinema were not first and foremost film, it wouldn't exist. Méliès is the greatest, but without Lumière, he would have languished in obscurity.[2]

Apart from a few details. For instance, the transformation of the hero who, in passing from book to screen, moves from false adventure to real, from Antonioni inertia to *Laramiesque* dignity.[3] For instance also, the nationality of the characters: Brigitte Bardot is no longer called Emilia but Camille, and as you will see she trifles none the less with Musset.[4] Each of the characters, moreover, speaks his own language which, as in *The Quiet American*, contributes to the feeling of people lost in a strange country. In another town, wrote Rimbaud;[5] two weeks, adds Minnelli, several tones lower. Here, though, two days only: an afternoon in Rome, a morning in Capri. Rome is the modern world, the West; Capri, the ancient world, nature before civilization and its neuroses. *Le Mépris*, in other words, might have been called *In Search of Homer*,[6] but it means lost time trying to discover the language of Proust beneath that of Moravia, and anyway that isn't the point.

Jack Palance in *Le Mépris*

The point of *Le Mépris* is that these are people who look at each other and judge each other, and then are in turn looked at and judged by the cinema – represented by Fritz Lang, who plays himself, or in effect the conscience of the film, its honesty. (I filmed the scenes of *The Odyssey* which he was supposed to be directing in *Le Mépris*, but as I play the role of his assistant, Lang will say that these are scenes made by his second unit.)

When I think about it, *Le Mépris* seems to me, beyond its psychological study of a woman who despises her husband, the story of castaways of the Western world, survivors of the shipwreck of modernity who, like the heroes of Verne and Stevenson, one day reach a mysterious deserted island, whose mystery is the inexorable lack of mystery, of truth that is to say. Whereas the Odyssey of Ulysses was a physical phenomenon, I filmed a spiritual odyssey: the eye of the camera watching these characters in search of Homer replaces that of the gods watching over Ulysses and his companions.

A simple film without mystery, an Aristotelian film, stripped of appearances, *Le Mépris* proves in 149 shots that in the cinema as in life there is no secret, nothing to elucidate, merely the need to live – and to make films.

97: Dictionary of American Film-makers

[*Cahiers du Cinéma* 150–151, Special American issue, December 1963–January 1964: the following seven entries were written by Godard]

Richard Brooks

A typical American intellectual, the Sergeant York of film-making, down to the crew-cut and pipe. *Lord Jim* and its new frontiers will confirm that he pushes Kennedyism to the Left, and that he is what Kazan described: a scriptwriter in the crowd, never diverted from his duties as a director by his lion-heart. So the career of this progressist makes exemplary progression, and if he pans, tracks or closes-up as if he were committing the marital act with integrity and violence, it is all now to his credit. From *Blackboard Jungle* to *Elmer Gantry*, the tradition of the great American primitives is clearly discernible: the direct and physical apprehension of reality, harmoniously combined with the perspective of reflection and wisdom.

Charlie Chaplin

He is beyond praise because he is the greatest of all. What else can one say? The only film-maker, anyway, to whom one can apply without misunderstanding that very misleading adjective, 'humane'. From the invention of the sequence shot in *The Champion* to that of *cinéma-vérité* in the final speech of *The Great Dictator*, Charles Spencer Chaplin, while remaining marginal to the rest of cinema, ended up by filling this margin with more things (what other word can one use: ideas, gags, intelligence, honour, beauty, movement?) than all the other directors together have put into the whole book. Today one says Chaplin as one says Da Vinci – or rather Charlie, like Leonardo. And what greater homage could one pay to an artist of the cinema in this mid twentieth century than to quote Rossellini's remark after he saw *A King in New York*: 'It is the film of a free man.'

Stanley Kubrick

Began flashily by making glacial copies of Ophuls's tracking shots and Aldrich's violence. Then became a recruit to intellectual commerce by following the international paths of glory of another K, an older Stanley who also saw himself as Livingstone, but whose weighty sincerity turned up trumps at Nüremberg, whereas Stanley Junior's cunning look-at-me tactics foundered in the cardboard heroics of Spartacus without ever attaining the required heroism. So *Lolita* led one to expect the worst. Surprise: it is a simple, lucid film, precisely written, which reveals America and American sex better than either Melville or Reichenbach,[1] and proves that Kubrick need not abandon the cinema provided he films characters who exist instead of ideas which exist only in the bottom drawers of old scriptwriters who believe that the cinema is the seventh art.

Richard Leacock

On the other side of the Atlantic, *cinéma-vérité* is translated as 'candid camera'. And Richard Leacock is Candide in more ways than one, busily hunting down truth without even asking himself which side of the Pyrenees his camera is on, this side or the other. Without asking, therefore, what truth he is after. By not separating cause and effect, by mixing the exception and the rule, Leacock and his team do not take into account (and the cinema

is precisely a rendering of accounts) the fact that their eye seeking images in the viewfinder is at once more and less than the recording apparatus used by that eye; yes, either more or less as the case may be (more with Welles, less with Hawks), but never merely the recording apparatus which, as the case may be, either remains a recorder or becomes pen and pencil. Thus deprived of consciousness, Leacock's camera loses, despite its honesty, the two fundamental qualities of a camera: intelligence and sensitivity. There is no use having clear images if the intention is hazy.[2] Moreover, Leacock's lack of subjectivity leads him in the end to lack objectivity. After having seen *The Chair*, we know less about the lawyer than in *Anatomy of a Murder*, and less about the electric chair than in a routine Susan Hayward melodrama. Similarly, we learn less about Kennedy the democrat by seeing *Primary* than by reading Ted White's book. This can easily be explained by noting that the Leacock team directs on the level of a Gordon Douglas, not even of Hathaway or Stuart Heisler, with the additional defect that they have no idea what it is they are staging, and that pure reportage does not exist. Hence the childish mania for filming things in close-up which cry out for long shot, for accompanying people instead of following them, for killing actuality by sticking too close to it: all the faults, in fact, which a cameraman from the Walt Disney documentary series would never commit. Nor does Leacock have any idea how to use a Magic-Marker[3] to annotate his rushes. Honesty, in other words, is not enough for a fighter in the avant-garde, particularly when he does not know that if reality is stranger than fiction, the latter returns the compliment.

Jonas Mekas

Compared to the two leaders of the New York school, Shirley Clarke and John Cassavetes, he looked a little like the poor relation, especially as one never knew whether it was him or his brother. Now *Hallelujah the Hills* proves through y+z that one has to reckon with Adolfas, who is an ace at pure invention or working without a net. Shot on the old principle of one shot, one idea, *Hallelujah* exudes an aura of ingenuous freshness and crafty charm. Physical exertion rubs shoulders boldly with intellectual gags. One is touched, and laughs at little things: an awkwardly framed bush, a banana in a pocket, a drum majorette in the snow. It is life according to Ramuz:[4] 'It's like dancing. One loves beginning, a cornet, a clarinet, one hates stopping, one's head spins, it is night.'

Orson Welles

One evening in Hamburg there are three people in the auditorium. The show begins. Orson Welles comes on stage and introduces himself: author, composer, actor, designer, producer, director, scholar, financier, gourmet, ventriloquist, poet. Then he expresses surprise that so many people have come, even though they are so few. Doubtless *The Trial* proves that it isn't easy for a wonder kid to grow old gracefully, and maybe it is to be feared that his giant wings are hindering our Shakespearian albatross from making

progress in old Europe. And yet, may we be accursed if we forget for one second that he alone with Griffith, one in silent days, one sound, managed to start up that marvellous little electric train in which Lumière did not believe. All of us will always owe him everything.

Billy Wilder

After a seven year itch, he decided no longer to be tongue-in-cheek about tragedy but, quite the contrary, to take comedy seriously. In so doing he took out a double indemnity for cinematographic survival, and success followed quickly. Even as he threw all the great human values to the wolves, Billy became one of the new great of Hollywood; and even as he replaced Wyler and Zinnemann in the hearts of the exhibitors, he established himself as a worthy heir to Lubitsch in the hearts of *cinéphiles*, for he had rediscovered the Berlin jester's soul of Billy the Kid, and malice served him henceforth as tenderness, irony as technical know-how. After Ariane and Marilyn, and in spite of One, Two, Three false steps, *Irma la Douce*, thanks to the keenness and delicacy of its Panavision, thanks to the limpidity of the acting of Jack and Shirley, thanks to the delicacy of the colours of LaShelle and Trauner, sweet Irma, as I say, sets a wonderful seal on a twin ascension to box-office and to art. The outcome: a combination of qualities peculiarly sufficient to turn a gentleman-in-waiting into a film-maker arrived.

98: The Ten Best American Sound Films

1. *Scarface* (Howard Hawks)
2. *The Great Dictator* (Charles Chaplin)
3. *Vertigo* (Alfred Hitchcock)
4. *The Searchers* (John Ford)
5. *Singin' in the Rain* (Kelly-Donen)
6. *The Lady from Shanghai* (Orson Welles)
7. *Bigger Than Life* (Nicholas Ray)
8. *Angel Face* (Otto Preminger)
9. *To Be or Not To Be* (Ernst Lubitsch)
10. *Dishonoured* (Josef von Sternberg)

99: *Orphée*

It was inevitable, once he had returned from the hell of Poligny, Billon, Delannoy[1] – bureaucrats more or less merciful towards that mortal enemy, the artist – that the poet should rediscover in filming *Orphée* his cinematographic spirit, his inspiration, his blood, his Eurydice in a word.

Orphée, a magical film where each image, like the lark in the mirror, reflects only itself, that is to say, us.

Orphée, a documentary where it is established, chronicled once and for all, that poetry is a craft for mortals and therefore mortally dangerous.

Where scholars use the cyclotron, Jean Cocteau contents himself more modestly with a Debrie 300. But to understand his researches into the matter of magic, or vice versa, one must not forget that the author of *Rappel à l'ordre* entered the studios under false pretences, as he himself comments off in a short film, at the moment when the red light came on.

To him, then, and to him alone, was given to apprehend Science at the precise twenty-fourth of a second when, Venus rising from the photographic bath, it is metamorphosed into Fiction. Thanks to him we have thus been able to watch Orphée listening to Radio London, drinking a beer on the terrace of the Café de Flore, and following to Monge Métro station the love of his life. Or rather of his death, as we now know since his testament, like that of Mabuse, has allowed us to decipher this astonishing film in which Nicolas Hayer lit the faces with arcs.

Contraband poetry, therefore, yes, and consequently the more precious, for it is true, the German Novalis tells us, that if the world becomes a dream,[2] the dream in its turn becomes a world. It is Cocteau's humility and also his glory that he neither could nor wanted to distinguish the legend of Orphée from his own – to distinguish, in other words, between *cinéma-vérité* and cinema-lie. If this makes fools laugh today . . . it is not everyone who can follow in the path of a poet such as this.

For myself, I shall always remember one spring evening in Cannes when, watching with other idlers, I saw Cocteau shepherding into the Palais du Cinéma a young boy[3] who was only at the beginning of his 400 blows. He guided him through the lights, whispering instructions: 'Don't walk too quickly, don't look down, look at the photographers, stand up straight, smile at France Roche.'[4] Before my admiring eyes, here was the old angel Heurtebise,[5] always in the thick of the fight, protecting the young ghost of Vigo under his great, black Academician's wing.

In other words, in all his films and *Orphée* in particular, Jean Cocteau tirelessly demonstrates that in order to create cinema we must rediscover Méliès, and that quite a few light years[6] are still necessary for this.

100: The Ten Best Films of 1963

1. *Procès de Jeanne d'Arc* (Robert Bresson)
2. *The Exterminating Angel* (Luis Buñuel)
3. *The Birds* (Alfred Hitchcock)
4. *The Chapman Report* (George Cukor)
5. *Adieu Philippine* (Jacques Rozier)
6. *Donovan's Reef* (John Ford)
7. *Muriel* (Alain Resnais)
8. *The Nutty Professor* (Jerry Lewis)
9. *Irma la Douce* (Billy Wilder)
10. *Two Weeks in Another Town* (Vincente Minnelli)

101: *Méditerranée*

What do we know of Greece today . . . what do we know of the swift heels of Atlanta . . . of the speeches of Pericles . . . of what Timon of Athens was thinking as he ascended the forum . . . or that scholar of Sparta while the

Orphée: the City of Death

Alphaville: the City of Light

fox ate his belly. Let us widen the debate . . . what do we know of ourselves, except that we were born there thousands of years ago. What do we know, therefore, of that proud moment when a few men, how shall I put it, instead of bringing the world down to them like some Darius or Genghis Khan, felt a kinship for it, a kinship for the light not sent by gods but reflected by themselves, kinship with the sun, kinship with the sea.

Jean-Daniel Pollet's film offers us, maybe not all, but at least the most important keys to this both decisive and natural moment . . . the most fragile ones too. In this banal series of 16 mm images over which breathes the ineffable spirit of 70 mm, it is up to us to discover the space which only the cinema can transform into lost time . . or rather the contrary . . . for here are smooth, round shots abandoned on the screen like pebbles on the beach . . . Then, like a wave, each transition impresses and effaces the word 'memory', the word 'happiness', the word 'woman', the word 'sky' . . . Death too, since Pollet, more courageous than Orphée, looks back several times at this Angel Face in some Hospital of Damascus or other.

102: *La Femme Mariée*

There are several ways of making films. Like Jean Renoir and Robert Bresson, who make music. Like Sergei Eisenstein, who paints. Like Stroheim, who wrote sound novels in silent days. Like Alain Resnais, who sculpts. And like Socrates, Rossellini I mean, who creates philosophy. The cinema, in other words, can be everything at once, both judge and litigant.

Misunderstandings often arise from the failure to remember this truth. Renoir, for instance, may be accused of being a bad painter, whereas no one would say this of Mozart. Resnais may be accused of being a bad story-teller, whereas no one would think of saying this of Giacometti. The whole, in other words, is confused with the part, denying either one the right of exclusion as well as inclusion.

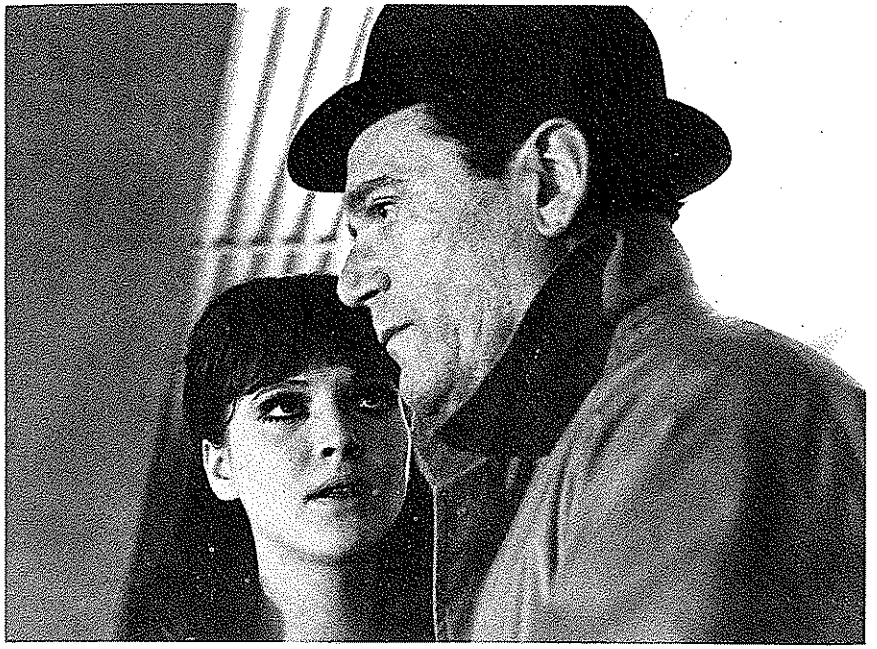
This is where the trouble begins. Is the cinema catalogued as a whole or a part? If you make a Western, no psychology; if you make a love-story, no chases or fights; if you make a light comedy, no adventures; and if you have adventures, no character analysis.

Woe unto me, then, since I have just made *La Femme Mariée*, a film where subjects are seen as objects, where pursuits by taxi alternate with ethnological interviews, where the spectacle of life finally mingles with its analysis: a film, in short, where the cinema plays happily, delighted to be only what it is.

103: Questionnaire to French Film-makers

What are you doing now, or what are your immediate projects? If you are preparing a film, under what conditions will it be produced?

An experimental art-house adventure story[1] with Eddie Constantine in the leading role. The film, which is as yet untitled, will be shot under the usual conditions to which this actor is accustomed.



Eddie Constantine and Anna Karina in *Alphaville*

Are you satisfied with the conditions under which your recent films were produced? Why? And if not, why?

Without exception, I have always been satisfied with the production conditions for my films. In my opinion, the difficulty is not in finding a producer and the complementary distributor. Not the chief difficulty, I mean, which is to find the right man for the right movie – something which has happened to me, but not always. Whereas *Le Mépris*, for instance, was very badly produced by a distributor (Joseph Levine) because he had no idea what sort of product he was turning out, it was brilliantly distributed by a producer (Edmond Tenoudji) because he knew the product that had been turned out and sold it as such.

What do you think about the way your films in particular, and French films in general, are distributed and exhibited?

My films are small-budget ones, and experience shows that small films are better distributed by small distributors for whom a few hundred thousand francs are of vital importance (to buy a new coat for their wives, to exchange their Simca for a Lancia, etc.), whereas a big distributor doesn't give a damn about a few hundred thousand: what he wants is to hit the jackpot. Just look at the distributors at the Casino in Cannes or Venice: the small ones play the even chances, while the big ones go for the long-odds playing numbers.

What do you think, over-all, of the present system of production and the financial advances from both distributors and the Commission du Centre? What is your personal experience of the Commission?

Since *A Bout de Souffle*, none of my films has ever benefited from an advance on receipts[2] from the Centre. I no longer even submit my scenarios to the Commission d'Avances, unless under a pseudonym.

On the other hand, all of my films except *Vivre sa Vie* were financed by an advance from a distributor who was more or less directly involved in the production of the film.

What do you think of the recent decrees (and the conclusions promised) about minimum crews and union membership?

I believe the cinema is a craft and that good workmen must have good tools. Some sort of codification is certainly necessary, provided it is done in the spirit of Montesquieu. You don't ask a carpenter who is making a chair to employ as many workmen as you would in building a house. The important thing is not to have a card-carrying cameraman (even whores no longer have them) but good camerawork; same thing for sound. You can get away with anything. For instance, I think the C.S.T.[3] and the unions are much too lenient with the projectionists.

What is your most cherished project? Do you have any hopes that it will come off in the near future, and with what sort of production and distribution? If not, why not?

My most cherished dream is to make all my films inside the studio. I never shall, for the very simple reason that the sets for *Sunrise* or *Foolish Wives* would be much too expensive for any producer-distributor today.

What do you think about the future, immediate and less immediate, of the French cinema. Are you optimistic, pessimistic or marking time?

I await the end of Cinema with optimism.

104: The Six Best French Films since the Liberation

1. *Le Plaisir* (Ophuls)
2. *La Pyramide humaine* (Rouch)
3. *Le Testament d'Orphée* (Cocteau)
4. *Le Testament du Docteur Cordelier* (Renoir)
5. *Pickpocket* (Bresson)
6. *Les Godelureaux* (Chabrol)

105: The Ten Best Films of 1964

1. *I Fidanzati* (Ermanno Olmi)
2. *Gertrud* (Carl Dreyer)
3. *Marnie* (Alfred Hitchcock)
4. *Man's Favourite Sport?* (Howard Hawks)
5. *The Red Desert* (Michelangelo Antonioni)

6. *A Distant Trumpet* (Raoul Walsh)
7. *Love with the Proper Stranger* (Robert Mulligan)
8. *Cheyenne Autumn* (John Ford)
9. *La Ragazza di Bube* (Luigi Comencini)
10. *L'Amour à la chaîne* (Claude de Givray)

106: Studying François

Films . . . are memory . . . and François has chosen to make them . . . chosen, by the same token, to make me remember him . . . so I remember quite a lot of things . . . no Vigo before he began . . . and talking of *L'Atalante*, François's dissolves, superimposition on superimposition, will lead him to Hitchcock . . . no Vigo because Gaumont had killed him, but his blood brother . . . a hot Saturday in July, we set off from the Place Clichy . . . the most beautiful square in Paris, so François insisted . . . we bought cigars next door to the Atomic . . . then went on to the Pax-Sèvres, where my godmother gave me ten thousand francs, a month's allowance in advance . . . we went to see *Red Angel* with Tilda Thamar . . . 'What a beautiful woman', said François over and over again . . . then we went back for the first house in the Avenue de Messine, where the terrible Rossif was punching tickets . . . François's great dream then was to live in the Hotel Truffaut, Street ditto, but they weren't in the same district . . . a unique address which no postman will ever read . . . even in a novel by Giraudoux, whom he likes less than Balzac, and he's right . . . *Truffaut, Paris* . . . but François can take heart . . . from hundreds of millions of spectators . . . in Chile, Singapore, Montreal, Yokohama, Helsinki . . . he sells damn well abroad . . . so quite a few men and women have seen the name appear like a watermark, as though on quality writing-paper, behind the rather solemn, romantic and charming faces of *Jules* and *The Pianist* . . . how is it that shyness and tenderness go hand-in-hand . . . that technique is the sister of emotion . . . and rigour of freedom . . . to find out . . . and never forget, since films are memory and there is no set penalty for crimes against the cinema . . . we must say farewell to Françoise Dorléac as she slips off her stockings in an inn in Normandy . . . farewell to Antoine Doinel as he runs along a beach like an Ophuls kite . . . oh! humiliated children of Bernanos, farewell till we meet again and again . . . even in 451 degrees *Fahrenheit* . . . seen and reseen . . . living models of the only film-maker increasing in seriousness.

107: Montparnasse-Levallois

In *Une Femme est une Femme*, Belmondo told this story[1] as a news item he had read in a paper. In fact the plot, which I altered, was taken from an early short story by Giraudoux. I was happy to be able to film the story – it gives a kind of reality to *Une Femme est une Femme*. It's my *Bande à part* mood, the Queneau side of life,[2] characters who live off the cuff and whose speech is recorded directly. It is constructed on the actors. The interesting thing is this sort of fluidity, being able to feel existence like physical matter: it is not

Montparnasse-Levallois: Philippe Hiquilly and Joanna Shimkus

the people who are important, but the atmosphere between them. Even when they are in close-up, life exists around them. The camera is on them, but the film is not centred on them. The film is a district, a particular time. It is Montparnasse. For me it corresponds to an idea of Montparnasse, an idea I have about painting and people . . . a Henry Miller idea. We shot the film in three or four takes, then cut them up a bit. Rouch filmed his sketch[3] in a single take. It was necessary for him, as the whole thing depends on the passage of time. Seconds reinforce seconds; when they really pile up, they begin to be impressive.

My film is different, more along the lines of life is a river. There is no idea of montage in it: it's a shooting, a filmed happening. I wrote the script and said: 'That is what is going on. This is what it means.' I had the meaning, the actors brought the sign, and Maysles[4] gave the signification. The three stages of semantics.

I had an event, I wrote it, I asked people to replay it, to relive it in any way they liked, given the fact that they were tied to a particular action and dialogue, and occupied a particular setting. They could occupy it as they liked, and Albert Maysles acted as a newsreel cameraman, as if he were faced by real events over which he had no control. I tried to organize the happening in the best way possible, but not to direct it like a theatrical production.

I got on very well with Maysles because he is a painter in his way of seeing. Wherever I would have moved the camera, he moved it. Afterwards he told me that when he wanted movement within the frame, the actors moved. One day I shall make a longer film with him where the whole thing will be organized along these lines. Maysles will have a vague idea of the story; I will rehearse movements and actions with the actors. Then, at a set time, someone will come out of Claridges and walk up the Champs-Elysées or go to the Latin Quarter. Maysles will be there. He knows what he can leave out and what he mustn't on any account miss. If there's an assassination, he must start filming just when the assassination starts. It's a ceremony I am premeditating.

108: *Pierrot* my friend

You say, 'Let's talk about *Pierrot*.' I say, 'What is there to say about it?' You say, 'All right, let's talk about something else and we will inevitably get back to it, like McArthur and the bad penny, for revenge and because it's normal.' But while waiting to dot the i's on some poem of Rimbaud, for isn't criticism quite simply or quite frankly, one or the other, a matter of understanding the poetic structure of a film, a thought that is, of managing to define that thought as an object, of seeing whether or not that object is living, and of eliminating the dead; while waiting, as I say, to discover what i's and what dots, like aircraft waiting to take off, better at the moment, rather than answers and questions, rivers of feelings promptly losing themselves in the sea of thoughts or vice versa, better to dissolve, dissolve, dissolve till one is out of breath as François[1] sometimes does, and he alone, because no one else knows how, or else it's the fashion, yes, better to drift into digressions so as to sew up again, with films as needle, the scattered pieces of our great white canvas, the one which is patched each year, today, this morning, as work begins, so we finally end by not knowing it is virgin, still virgin, like negative stock whether it be called Dupont, Ilford or Kodak, still in one piece too, and which one only has to blow on vigorously to stretch, that is to say to set those who have lost their way sailing in the right direction, whatever the name of the prompter may be, Skolimowski, Hitchcock, Langlois. Yes, dissolve, magnetic montage of ideas, without points of suspension, this is neither a thriller nor Céline, let's leave him to literature, he well deserves it, suffering and piling book upon book amid the regiments of language, we, with the cinema, are something else, life first of all, which isn't new, but difficult to speak of, one can barely live it and die, but speak of it, well, there are books, but in the cinema, we have no books, we have only music and painting, and even those, as you know, can be lived but rarely spoken. So, *Pierrot*, maybe you understand a little why what to say about it? Because life is its subject, with scope and colour as its attributes, for I have big ideas. Life, I should say a start to life, rather as the story of Euclid's parallels is a start to geometry. There have been other lives, and there will be more, just think of the blossoms broken, the lion hunt with bow and

arrows, the silence in a hotel in the north of Sweden.[2] But other lives always disconcert. All the more reason, therefore, for life itself which I wanted to make so much of so that it would be wondered at, or reduced to its basic elements, like a professor of natural history, a good definition in passing of *Pierrot* to interest pupils, the inhabitants of the earth in general, and cinema audiences in particular. In short, the life itself which I wanted to capture by way of panoramic shots of nature, fixed shots of death, brief shots and long takes, sounds loud and quiet, what else, movements of Anna and Jean-Paul, actor or actress free and enslaved, but which rhymes with man and woman? But life struggles more than Nanook's fish, slips between our fingers like the memory of Muriel in rebuilt Boulogne, is eclipsed between the images, and here, parenthetically, I take the opportunity of telling you that as if by chance the only great problem with cinema seems to me more and more with each film when and why to start a shot and when and why to end it. Life, in other words, fills the screen as a tap fills a bath which is simultaneously emptying at the same rate at the same time. It passes, and the memory which it leaves us is in its own image, unlike painting which lacks the transparency of Eastman as Picasso found watching his *Mystère* projected on the huge screen of the L.T.C.,[3] unlike music and the novel too which have been able to discover, employ and define two or three means of taming it. Life vanishes from the dark screens of our cinema as Albertine escaped from the carefully closed room of Sainte-Beuve's[4] enemy. Even worse, like Proust it is absolutely impossible for me to console myself by transforming this subject into object. One might as well try, like Poe's character William Wilson, whose story Pierrot tells in reel three, after that of the suicide of Nicolas de Stael,[5] because everything fits as they say, in life, without ever knowing whether it fits because that's life or the opposite, and anyway I say the opposite, because I am using words, and words can be reversed and replace each other, whereas can the life they represent be reversed? A question as dangerous as it is perplexing and a crossroads where ideas wonder which road to take next, and Marianne Renoir, same reel a little later, quotes a nice phrase from Pavese[6] in which it is said that one must never ask what came first, words or things, nor what will come after, one knows one is alive, only this matters, and so it was for me filming a true cinema image, its true symbol, but a symbol, no more, for what was true of Marianne and Pierrot, not asking what came first, was not true of me because that was precisely what I was asking, in other words, at the very moment I was sure I had captured life, it escaped me for this very reason, and here I fall on my feet again and those of William Wilson who thought he had seen his double in the street, followed him, killed him, realized he was himself and that he, who remained alive, was only his double. Wilson, as they say, was making himself a film. Taken literally, this expression gives us a pretty good idea, or definition by reel, of the problems of the cinema, where the real and the imaginary are clearly distinct and yet are one, like the Moebius curve which has at the same time one side and two, like the

technique of *cinéma-vérité* which is also a technique of lying. It's pretty disconcerting, to say the least. Doubtless that is why it is difficult to say anything at all about the cinema, since here as well as there, Sergei Eisenstein as well as Jean Renoir, the end and the means are always confused, because, as Malraux said, it is a matter of hearing with one's ears the sound of one's own voice which we are accustomed to hearing with the throat. So a Nagra or a Telefunken would be enough. But it's because that isn't all. The voice issuing from the loudspeaker we eventually accept as our own, but even so in our ears it is something else, or to be very precise, it is other people, so one is faced with a very difficult thing which is to listen to other people with one's throat. This double movement, which projects us towards others while taking us inside ourselves, physically defines the cinema. I stress the word physically, to be understood in its simplest sense. One might almost say tactilely, to draw a distinction between the other arts. With Mozart, the deathly sound of the clarinet is alive, metaphysical, mournful, magical, anything you like, but not tactile. One can talk about it for hours, write books about it, that is even in a way what it is for, to help broadly in living. The same goes for Matisse red or Delacroix green, about which Aragon or Baudelaire talk for hours on end, for our pleasure as well and perhaps much less than theirs. But who needs to talk for hours about the grief of Yang Kwei Fei,[7] the tramcar in *Sunrise*, Mark Dixon Detective,[8] or the charming, tragic eyes of Luise Rainer? Two or three film-loving friends of an evening, and that because they can't afford a taxi and have to walk back on foot from the Cinémathèque to their garret rooms. If they had the money and the film were running commercially, they would go back to see it again. If you wake the woman you love in the night, you don't telephone your friends to tell them about it afterwards. Difficult, you see, to talk about cinema, the art is easy but criticism impossible of this subject which is no subject, whose wrong side is not the right, which draws close as it recedes, always physically, let us not forget. In short, to know the cinema seems as arduous as Claudel's East.[9] I quote: No road is the path I must follow. Nothing, returning, welcomes me, or, leaving, releases me. This tomorrow is not of the day which was yesterday. This last sentence in terms of cinema: two shots which follow each other do not necessarily follow each other. The same goes for two shots which do not follow each other. In this sense, one can say that *Pierrot* is not really a film. It is rather an attempt at cinema. And the cinema, by making reality disgorge, reminds us that one must attempt to live.

109: Let's Talk about *Pierrot*

Cahiers: What exactly was the starting-point for *Pierrot le Fou*?

Godard: A *Lolita*-style novel whose rights I had bought two years earlier. The film was to have been made with Sylvie Vartan. She refused. Instead I made *Bande à part*. Then I tried to set the film up again with Anna Karina and Richard Burton. Burton, alas, had become too Hollywood. In the end

You Only Live Once: Sylvia Sidney and Henry Fonda

the whole thing was changed by the casting of Anna and Belmondo. I thought about *You Only Live Once*; and instead of the *Lolita* or *La Chienne* kind of couple, I wanted to tell the story of the last romantic couple, the last descendants of *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, *Werther* and *Hermann and Dorothea*.

Cahiers: This sort of romanticism is disconcerting today, just as the romanticism of *La Règle du Jeu* was at the time.

Godard: One is always disconcerted by something or other. One Sunday afternoon a couple of weeks ago I saw *October* again at the Cinémathèque. The audience was composed entirely of children, going to the cinema for the first time, so they reacted as if it was the first film they had seen. They may have been disconcerted by the cinema, but not by the film. For instance, they were not at all put out by the rapid, synthetic montage. When they now see a Verneuil film they will be disconcerted because they will think, 'But there are fewer shots than in *October*.' Let's take another example from America, where television is much more cut up and fragmented than it is in France. There one doesn't just watch a film from beginning to end; one sees fifteen shows at the same time while doing something else, not to mention the commercials (if *they* were missing, that *would* disconcert). *Hiroshima* and *Lola Montès* went down much better on TV in America than in the cinemas.

Pierrot le Fou: Jean-Paul Belmondo and Anna Karina

Cahiers: *Pierrot*, in any case, will please children. They can dream while watching it.

Godard: The film, alas, is banned to children under eighteen. Reason? Intellectual and moral anarchy [*sic*].

Cahiers: There is a good deal of blood in *Pierrot*.

Godard: Not blood, red. At any rate, I find it difficult to talk about the film. I can't say I didn't work it out, but I didn't pre-think it. Everything happened at once: it is a film in which there was no writing, editing or mixing – well, one day! Bonfanti knew nothing of the film and he mixed the soundtrack without preparation. He reacted with his knobs like a pilot faced by air-pockets. This was very much in key with the spirit of the film. So the construction came at the same time as the detail. It was a series of structures which immediately dovetailed one with another.

Cahiers: Did *Bande à part* and *Alphaville* happen in the same way?

Godard: Ever since my first film, I have always said I am going to prepare the script more carefully, and each time I see yet another chance to improvise, to do it all in the shooting, without applying the cinema to something. My impression is that when someone like Demy or Bresson shoots a film, he has an idea of the world he is trying to apply to the cinema, or else – which

comes to the same thing – an idea of cinema which he applies to the world. The cinema and the world are moulds for matter, but in *Pierrot* there is neither mould nor matter.

Cahiers: There seems at times to be an interaction between certain situations which existed at the moment of shooting and the film itself. For instance, when Anna Karina walks along the beach saying 'What is there to do? I don't know what to do' . . . as if, at this moment, she hadn't known what to do, had said so, and you had filmed her.

Godard: It didn't happen that way, but maybe it comes to the same thing. If I had seen a girl walking along the shore saying 'I don't know what to do,' I might well have thought this was a good scene; and, starting from there, imagined what came before and after. Instead of speaking of the sky, speaking of the sea, which isn't the same thing; instead of being sad, being gay, instead of dancing, having a scene with people eating, which again isn't the same thing; but the final effect would have been the same. In fact it happened like that not for this scene, but another in which Anna says to Belmondo 'Hi! old man.' and he imitates Michel Simon. That came about the way you suggest.

Cahiers: One feels that the subject emerges only when the film is over. During the screening one thinks this is it, or that, but at the end one realizes there was a real subject.

Godard: But that's cinema. Life arranges itself. One is never quite sure what one is going to do tomorrow, but at the end of the week one can say, after the event, 'I have lived,' like Musset's Camille.[1] Then one realizes one cannot trifle with the cinema either. You see someone in the street; out of ten passers-by there is one you look at more closely for one reason or another. If it's a girl, because she has eyes like so, a man because he has a particular air about him, and then you film their life. A subject will emerge which will be the person himself, his idea of the world, and the world created by this idea of it, the overall idea which this conjures. In the preface to one of his books, Antonioni says precisely this.

Cahiers: One feels that *Pierrot* takes place in two periods. In the first, Karina and Belmondo make their way to the Côte d'Azur, no cinema, because this is their life; and then, on arrival, they met a director and told him their story, and he made them begin all over again.

Godard: To a certain extent, yes, because the whole last part was invented on the spot, unlike the beginning which was planned. It is a kind of happening, but one that was controlled and dominated. This said, it is a completely spontaneous film. I have never been so worried as I was two days before shooting began. I had nothing, nothing at all. Oh well, I had the book. And a certain number of locations. I knew it would take place by the sea. The whole thing was shot, let's say, like in the days of Mack Sennett. Maybe I am growing more and more apart from one section of current film-making.

Watching old films, one never gets the impression that they were bored working, probably because the cinema was something new in those days, whereas today people tend to look on it as very old. They say 'I saw an old Chaplin film, an old Griffith film,' whereas no one says 'I read an old Stendhal, an old Madame de La Fayette.'

Cahiers: Do you feel you work more like a painter than a novelist?

Godard: Jean Renoir explains this very well in the book he wrote about his father. Auguste would go away, feeling a need for the country. He went there. He walked in the forest. He slept in the nearest inn. After a couple of weeks he would come back, his painting finished.

Cahiers: Early films tell us a good deal about the period in which they were made. This is no longer true of 75 per cent of current productions. In *Pierrot le Fou*, do contemporary life and the fact that Belmondo is writing his journal give the film its real dimension?

Godard: Anna represents the active life and Belmondo the contemplative. This is by way of contrasting them. As they are never analysed, there are no analytical scenes or dialogue. I wanted, indirectly through the journal, to give the feeling of reflection.

Cahiers: Your characters allow themselves to be guided by events.

Godard: They are abandoned to their own devices. They are inside both their adventure and themselves.

Cahiers: The only real act Belmondo accomplishes is when he tries to extinguish the fuse.

Godard: If he had put it out, he would have become different afterwards. He is like Piccoli in *Le Mépris*.

Cahiers: The adventure is sufficiently total for one not to be able to know what comes next.

Godard: This is because it is a film about the adventure rather than about the adventurers. A film about adventurers is Anthony Mann's *The Far Country*, where you think about the adventure because they are adventurers; whereas in *Pierrot le Fou*, one thinks it is about adventurers because it describes an adventure. Anyway it is difficult to separate one from the other. We know from Sartre that the free choice which the individual himself makes is mingled with what is usually called his destiny.

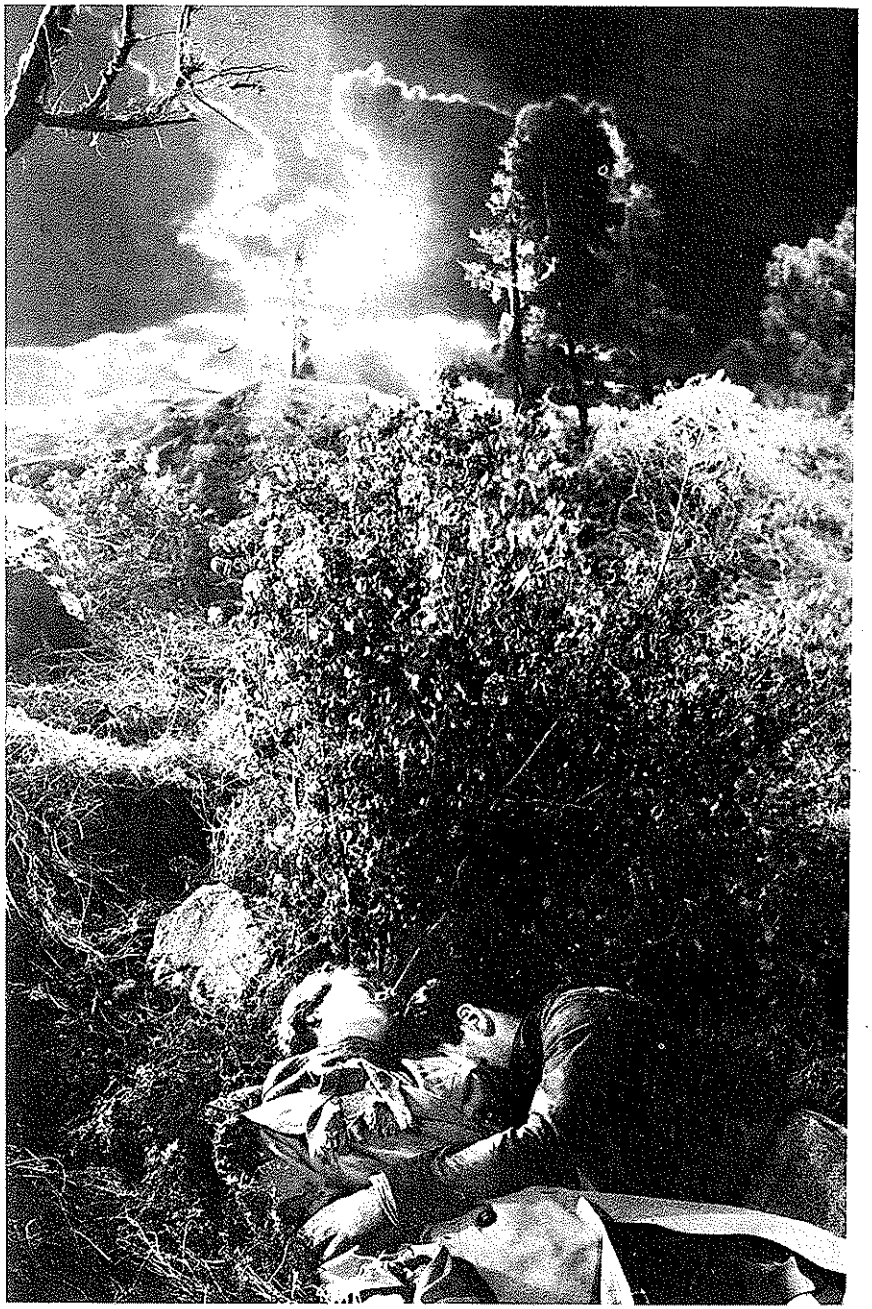
Cahiers: Even more than in *Le Mépris*, the poetic presence of the sea . . .

Godard: This was deliberate, much more so than in *Le Mépris*. This is the theme.

Cahiers: Exactly as if the gods were in the sea.

Godard: No, nature; the presence of nature, which is neither romantic nor tragic.

Cahiers: Adventure seems to have vanished today, to be no longer welcome; hence the element of provocation now in adventure and in *Pierrot le Fou*.



'The story of the last romantic couple': *You Only Live Once* and . . .

. . . *Pierrot le Fou*

Godard: People pigeon-hole adventure. 'We're off on holiday,' they say, 'the adventure will begin as soon as we are at the seaside.' They don't think of themselves as living the adventure when they buy their train tickets, whereas in the film everything is on the same level: buying train tickets is as exciting as swimming in the sea.

Cahiers: Do you feel that all your films, irrespective of the way they are handled, are about the spirit of adventure?

Godard: Certainly. The important thing is to be aware one exists. For three-quarters of the time during the day one forgets this truth, which surges up again as you look at houses or a red light, and you have the sensation of existing in that moment. This was how Sartre began writing his novels. *La Nausée*, of course, was written during the great period when Simenon was publishing *Touristes de Bananes*, *Les Suicidés*. To me there is nothing very new about the idea, which is really a very classical one.

Cahiers: *Pierrot* is both classical – no trickery with montage – and modern, by virtue of its narrative.

Godard: What is modern by virtue of its narrative? I prefer to say its greater freedom. By comparison with my previous film, one gets an immediate response. Although I ask myself fewer and fewer questions now, one still

remains: isn't no longer asking questions a serious thing? The thing that reassures me is that the Russians, at the time of *October* and *Enthusiasm* didn't ask themselves questions. They didn't ask themselves what cinema should be. They didn't wonder if they should take up where the German cinema left off or repudiate films like *L'Assassinat du Duc de Guise*.[2] No, there was a more natural way of asking questions. This is what one feels with Picasso. Posing problems is not a critical attitude but a natural function. When a motorist deals with traffic problems, one simply says he is driving; and Picasso paints.

Cahiers: Don't you think that most great films have been directed by men who had no taste for questions?

Godard: To think that would be a mistake. When one sees an early King Vidor film, for instance, one realizes how far in advance he was of Hollywood even today. Truffaut compared *The Crowd* to *The Apartment*. Well, Vidor had already used the famous office shot – which Wilder got from Lubitsch anyway. But great films like that could no longer be made today, or at least not in the same way. So the silent cinema was more revolutionary than the sound cinema, and people understood better, even though it was a more abstract way of talking. Today, if one imitated Chaplin's method of direction, people wouldn't understand so well. They would think it a peculiar way of telling a story. It's even more true of Eisenstein's films.

Cahiers: For the majority of spectators, cinema exists only in terms of the Hollywood structures which have become convention, whereas all the great films are free in their inspiration.

Godard: The great traditional cinema means Visconti as opposed to Fellini or Rossellini. It is a way of selecting certain scenes rather than others. The Bible is also a traditional book since it effects a choice in what it describes. If I were ever to film the life of Christ, I would film the scenes which are left out of the Bible. In *Senso*, which I quite like, it was the scenes which Visconti concealed that I wanted to see. Each time I wanted to know what Farley Granger said to Alida Valli, bang! – a fade out. *Pierrot le Fou*, from this standpoint, is the antithesis of *Senso*: the moments you do not see in *Senso* are shown in *Pierrot*.

Cahiers: Perhaps the beauty of the film springs from the fact that one senses this liberty more.

Godard: The trouble with the cinema is that it imposes a certain length of film. If my films reveal some feeling of freedom it is because I never think about length. I never know if what I am shooting will run twenty minutes or twice that, but it usually turns out that the result fits the commercial norm. I never have any time scheme. I shoot what I need, stopping when I think I have it all, continuing when I think there is more. This is full length dependent only on itself.

Cahiers: In a classical film, one would query the thriller framework.

Godard: On the narrative level, classical films can no longer rival even *Série Noire* thrillers, not to mention born storytellers like Giono who can hold you in suspense for days on end. The Americans are good at story-telling, the French are not. Flaubert and Proust can't tell stories. They do something else. So does the cinema, though starting from their point of arrival, from a totality. Any great modern film which is successful is so because of a misunderstanding. Audiences like *Psycho* because they think Hitchcock is telling them a story. *Vertigo* baffles them for the same reason.

Cahiers: So freedom has moved from the cinema to the *Série Noire*. Do you remember *The Glass Key*? The end?

Godard: Not very clearly. I'd like to re-read it.

Cahiers: At the end a woman who has hardly featured in the story suddenly recounts a dream.

Godard: The Americans are marvellous like that.

Cahiers: In the dream, there is a glass key. Just that, and the novel is called *The Glass Key*. And the book ends with this dream. If one did something like this in the cinema, people would say it was provocation. This sort of reaction is typical of a public which has a cinematographic pseudo-culture but nevertheless indulges in terrorist tactics.

Godard: This is why the Cinémathèque is so good, because there one sees films pell-mell, a 1939 Cukor alongside a 1918 documentary.

Cahiers: There is no clash between ancient and modern?

Godard: None at all. There may be technical progress, but no revolution in style, or at least not yet.

Cahiers: With *Pierrot le Fou*, one feels one is watching the birth of cinema.

Godard: I felt this with Rossellini's film about steel, because it captured life at source. Television, in theory, should have the same effect. Thanks to the cultural alibi, there is no such thing as noble or plebeian subjects. Everything is possible on television. Very different from the cinema, where it would be impossible to film the building of the Boulevard Haussmann[3] because to a distributor this isn't a noble subject.

Cahiers: Why do you think certain scenes are filmed rather than others? Does this choice define liberty or lead to convention?

Godard: The problem which has long preoccupied me, but which I don't worry about while shooting, is: why do one shot rather than another? Take a story, for example. A character enters a room – one shot. He sits down – another shot. He lights a cigarette, etc. If, instead of treating it this way, one . . . would the film be better or less good?

What is it ultimately that makes one run a shot on or change to another? A director like Delbert Mann probably doesn't think this way. He follows a pattern. Shot – the character speaks; reverse angle, someone answers. Maybe this is why *Pierrot le Fou* is not a film, but an attempt at film.

Cahiers: And what Fuller says at the beginning?

Godard: I had wanted to say it for a long time. I asked him to. But it was Fuller himself who found the word 'emotion'. The comparison between film and a commando operation is from every point of view – financial, economic, artistic – a perfect image, a perfect symbol for a film in its totality.

Cahiers: Who is the enemy?

Godard: There are two things to consider. On the one hand the enemy who harries you; on the other, the goal to be reached, where the enemy may be. The goal to be reached is the film, but once it is finished one realizes it was only a passage, a path to the goal. What I mean is that when the war is won, life continues. And maybe the film really begins then.

Cahiers: Isn't this sort of liberty in the cinema rather frightening?

Godard: No more than crossing a road either using a crossing or not. *Pierrot* seems to me both free and confined at the same time. What worries me most about this apparent liberty is something else. I read something by Borges[4] where he spoke of a man who wanted to create a world. So he created houses, provinces, valleys, rivers, tools, fish, lovers, and then at the end of his life he notices that this 'patient labyrinth is none other than his own portrait'. I had this same feeling in the middle of *Pierrot*.

Cahiers: Why the quotation about Velazquez?

Godard: This is the theme. Its definition. Velazquez at the end of his life no longer painted precise forms, he painted what lay between the precise forms, and this is restated by Belmondo when he imitates Michel Simon: one should not describe people, but what lies between them.

Cahiers: If *Pierrot le Fou* is an instinctive film, one might wonder why there are connections with life and actuality.

Godard: It is inevitable, since making *Pierrot le Fou* consisted of living through an event. An event is made up of other events which one eventually discovers. In general, I repeat, making a film is an adventure comparable to that of an army advancing through a country and living off the inhabitants. So one is led to talk about those inhabitants. That is what actuality is: it is both what one calls actuality in the cinematographic and journalistic sense, and casual encounters, what one reads, conversations, the business of living in other words.

Cahiers: Each time actuality crops up in the film, one has the impression that there is a rupture in mood.

Godard: When, for instance?

Cahiers: The Vietnam war references . . .

Godard: I don't think so. In a world of violence, it is violence that controls the way things evolve. Anna and Belmondo meet some American tourists, and they know how to amuse them. They play the game. If they had met Russian or Spanish tourists, they would probably have acted differently.

Of course it was I who chose to have American tourists rather than any other. But in any case it suited the improvised theatre aspect. Someone coming back from China told me this is how it happens: suddenly, in a market-place, five people come along; one plays the American imperialist, and so on. Just like children playing cops and robbers. My inclusion of a newsreel about Vietnam after that was pure logic: it was to show Belmondo that they were playing a game, but that nevertheless the matter of their game pre-existed.

Cahiers: Conversely, would you consider filming a political subject with individual repercussions?

Godard: A purely political subject is difficult to do. For politics, you need insight into the points of view of four or five different people, and at the same time have a broad over-all grasp. Politics involves both past and present. When you read Churchill's memoirs, you understand very clearly what is happening today. You think, so that is what he was thinking when he took part in such and such a conference; but you only learn this twenty years later. It is more difficult in the cinema: you have no time since you are dealing with the present. What would interest me is the life of a student, the story of *Clarté*,[5] for instance. But a film about the life of an editor of *Clarté* would have been possible two years ago. Now it's too late, or too soon. It should have been done at the time, since the situation made it possible, with a broad outline scenario, and working along *cinéma-vérité* lines subject to direction and structural organization.

Cahiers: It is often said that dragging politics like this into a story such as the Anna-Belmondo adventure is dilettantism.

Godard: The answer to that is simple: you can read *Le Monde* seriously or as a dilettante. Either way, the fact is that you do read it, and that is part of life. In the cinema, however, one isn't supposed, if one is in a room, simply to open the window and film what is going on outside. The grumblers see this as a rupture in unity, but for all that fail to see where the unity lies. One may feel that in *Pierrot* the unity is purely emotional, and point out that something does not fit this emotional unity, but simply to say that politics have no right to be there is pointless since they are part of the emotional unity. Here we come back to the old classification by genres: a film is poetic, psychological, tragic, but it is not allowed simply to be a film. Naturally if I were to make a film about the Dreyfus case, you would see very little about the case and a good deal about people and their personal relationships. Another fascinating thing to do now would be the life of a shorthand-typist at Auschwitz (Mikhail Romm has made a documentary compilation along these lines called *Ordinary Fascism*). But a film about a shorthand-typist at Auschwitz would be hated by everybody. The so-called left wing has always been the first to criticize the real left-wing film-makers, both Pasolini and Rossellini in Italy, Dovzhenko and Eisenstein in Russia. One can only talk about the milieu one knows at first; later, with age and experience, this

milieu opens out. It is very curious that in France there have never been any films about the Resistance. The Italians, of course, dealt with the problem of the Resistance and the Liberation in political terms because they had experienced them in a much more obvious way, and Fascism had affected Italy more than France. Yet from an emotional point of view, the lives of the generation before our own were completely disrupted by the war. Even now they are still living the pre-war days and have not emerged into the post-war period. But no films about this either. No film about the adventures of the Ponchardier brothers, the real Frank and Jesse James of the Resistance. In America or Russia there would have been twenty films about Moulin,[6] the Maquis de Glières,[7] and so on. In France, one film did try to evoke the *ambiance* of 1944, Dewewer's *Les Honneurs de la Guerre*. It was all but banned. As soon as a film comes along which is more or less honest, a climate of suspicion and disparagement springs up.

Cahiers: There seems to be an unwillingness in France to consider the Liberation in ideological terms.

Godard: Things are more open in Italy. In France, politics is a shameful problem. A sin. This is why French politics just don't exist.

Cahiers: There is no French equivalent to the political discussions one finds in *Il Terrorista*,[8] for example.

Godard: It's a native element. In France you can show neither policeman nor workman, neither those who tread nor those trodden on.

Cahiers: There are no communists in the French cinema.

Godard: It's impossible. If someone wanted to make a film about the life of a communist he would have terrible trouble with the Party, who would tell him what and what not to do. Suppose the character is selling *Huma-dimanche* and he stops for a drink, they would say you couldn't possibly show a vendor of *Humanité-dimanche* drinking. It's another kind of censorship. The Party is as tough with its students as De Gaulle and Fouchet[9] are with theirs.

Cahiers: The surprising thing about your project on *Clarté* is that for the first time someone describing a milieu would be receiving information.

Godard: My only ideas were about details. I didn't know enough. Just as I am incapable of filming in an unknown setting, I can't talk about a milieu I don't know. The reason I began by filming bourgeois stories is that I come from the bourgeoisie. If I had come from a peasant background, I would probably have made different films. But it is difficult for me to do otherwise. I can only bring it off with groups. For *Une Femme Mariée* I would have liked a couple whose social situation was lower and more precarious. The husband could have been a 'P3', for instance. But I ran the risk of falling into the same trap as *Le Bonheur*, of being flat and artificial. I was afraid of making mistakes. But not about Macha Méril. No woman like that really exists, people may retort. I agree, but I could show you a dozen in the pages of

Madame Express or *Elle*. Someone who only knows about ants can't talk about beetles.

Cahiers: There are ways of getting round social categories and yet coming back to them, as in *Les Carabiniers*.

Godard: Yes, provided the subject is abstract enough to allow this. One must then be aware, discover the realism beneath the abstraction.

Cahiers: The ideological confusion today is such that young people are afraid to tackle this sort of problem even when they are aware of it. They doubt; they have no single truth to fall back on as before.

Godard: There are two things: to really know the problem, to want to talk about it; and to be strong enough, to feel that one is sufficiently in command of one's means of expression to be able to tackle the problem.

Cahiers: This brings us to the problems facing people who want to break into the cinema.

Godard: Up to a point it is easier than it once was. If someone really wants to make his first film nowadays, 8 mm. costs less than it used to. Of course if he wants to start off by making *Spartacus*, then it's just as difficult as it always was and will be. When you come down to it, for us, making our first films meant writing in *Cahiers*. When my first article appeared in *Arts*, this was as important to me as when I directed *A Bout de Souffle*. If an unknown is given the chance to make a documentary about Mont-Saint-Michel for television, well, this is the most important thing that ever happened to him. Not everyone agrees about this. I am sure it must be wonderful for a young Russian just out of the school who has had a project accepted, because at last he's going to get his hands on a camera, actors and a little film stock. In France, there is television. Most people manage to get in after a year or two, because television, unlike the cinema, eats up its material and can't get enough of it. Sooner or later, even a simple documentary will open the doors for you. The young confuse creating cinema with making a film. The film of your dreams never happens. Not for Fellini, not for anyone. A man who wanted to make a car today, who had ideas for a car, would find it very difficult to have it accepted and put into production by Renault, Ford or Citroen. But one must remember that it is much more difficult for a Renault worker to escape and broaden his universe than it is for a young student who loves the cinema: because there is no class struggle in the cinema. Theoretically, it is much easier to go and see Contamine[10] at television, even for an unknown who wants to make films, than it is for a mechanic or a welder to get an interview with Dreyfus from the Renault management. This is enormously important, because the worker feels he will spend his life doing the same thing, and that if he wants to escape he will have trouble because he takes no pride in what he does. In order to live, he has to do a certain kind of work which is futile. Most of the time he lives as a prisoner, whereas in television or the cinema, you create images, you do so to earn a living,

but even if you are an assistant director, one day sooner or later you will be the master if you want to be, master of your own image.

Cahiers: There are two categories of aspiring director: those who want to handle a camera and film stock, and those who want to make a particular film.

Godard: Obviously it is as much a matter of cinema whether one wants to make a particular film or just wants to handle the camera. Dreyer, Antonioni, Rivette, Rohmer, Marker, Bresson do not and never will make anything but the film they want to make. They start shooting only if they think they can make a particular film and no other. But when one makes one's first film, one simply wants to create something rather than make a particular film, or else one has vague ideas that soon go off course. In any case the cinema should be demystified. *Ivan the Terrible* must be as important to its director as a documentary about oil in Aquitaine. Today the forms of cinema are manifold, so it should be easy to make films. All you need do is choose between instructional films, documentaries, travelogues, all those categories which used to be less plentiful. Yesterday in Rome I saw Bertolucci. He was leaving for three months in the East for Shell.[11] Admittedly he wasn't waving any flags, but he wasn't depressed either. His attitude was a healthy one. There are, in fact, as many preconceived ideas among habitués of the Cinémathèque as among the kind of people who distribute Gilles Grangier[12] films – about what is good or not good and what should be done. To my mind this is a negative attitude which harms the cinema. If some incompetent takes your place to make a short film about jazz or a TV programme about the theatre, one day you will find they have been commissioned to make *Ubu* or *The Persians* and it will be too late to cry.

Cahiers: You say your first critical writing was as important to you as your first film. Do you think the problem of getting a start in criticism is the same in 1965 as it was in 1955?

Godard: The situation is exactly the same. The film magazines are the most tolerant and open, even if they don't all think the same way.

Cahiers: But maybe things seem less clear than they used to for the critic today.

Godard: It may be more difficult, but the problems are the same. Criticism has attained the age of reason. In the past, when Jean-Georges Auriol[13] talked about a film, he used only to say what he liked about it, and that was fine: this was criticism by a sensitive, intelligent man, living in his time, who affirmed that cinema was as important as any other art. Then Bazin started analysing what he liked. Next there was a certain reaction against this analysis: people started to build edifices, to make definitions of cinema which hadn't been made. Because Jean-Georges Auriol never defined the cinema, he didn't say Wyler is not so good as Ford, or the reverse. All he said was, Loretta Young is prettier than Joan Crawford; and at the time, that was fine. With Bazin, came a more considered approach to the cinema. And now,

the cinema isn't necessarily like that at all, one says, everything must be reconsidered, the cinema we know may only be a tiny part of a much vaster cinema, and other examples are given. Bazin talked about Charlie in connection with the later Chaplin films, but never thought of him as a contemporary and colleague of Griffith, as the Nouvelle Vague did. Doubtless this was due to the fact that criticism was our apprenticeship to direction. If young critics today are really more at sea than we were, this is because they have simultaneously to make an effort at reflection or distantiation, and live. They have to be distant and not distant at the same time, to live and watch life. Which may be more difficult for them than for me, since I no longer need to write criticism, I make films, being lucky enough to be able to do so.

Cahiers: What criticism did ten years ago rather resembles Mendeleev's[14] classification: people believed there were only seven or eight elements, and the Nouvelle Vague said not seven or eight but many more, two or three hundred. From that moment modern chemistry was born. We are now at this stage.

Godard: We must go beyond it. Especially as these ideas have spread and exist in every country.

Cahiers: There has been a sort of levelling out of criticism and opinions. Maybe it is no bad thing, because it forces us to think particularly about what is new in the cinema. It is more interesting for us to talk about Skolimowski than Hitchcock, which doesn't mean to say that we prefer one to the other.

Godard: Yes.

Cahiers: The second difficulty facing criticism today is one of vocabulary: the critical vocabulary is so repetitive and impoverished that one has to resort to the language of literary criticism, which doesn't prevent one from talking about everything in the same way, because there aren't millions of words and they are repeated incessantly for different sorts of film.

Godard: When I wrote my first article, I simultaneously discovered the cinema and wrote my first novel. Perhaps the young today should consider that writing is as important as anything else, that it may help them, that writing is like filming if they want to make films, and they must find their own language: writing is not merely the application of certain devices.

Cahiers: The problem lies in talking about films other than those being discussed all the time, and talking about them differently.

Godard: Exactly. One must find a different way to describe Skolimowski's films. To begin with, for instance, no one ever talked about 'shots' in criticism. Now that's all anyone does talk about, and people know what a shot is as well as they know what actors and producers are. But the problem of film criticism arises because, like art criticism, it is not a genre which exists in its own right. All the great art critics have been poets. Only literary criticism exists in its own right, because its object blends with its subject. Otherwise, all the interesting books of criticism on painting or music have been written by great creators from another art. Film criticism is much the same.

Cahiers: All the same, writing and filming aren't the same thing.

Godard: They are different, of course, but connected. Criticism serves a useful function which should not be overlooked: it has the virtue of purification. Criticism should be written primarily for one's own sake rather than for the cinema. When one makes films, one may no longer write articles but one still thinks them. I consider myself a critic still, I simply no longer write it; and it is still as useful to me, only I don't give it to other people to read.

Cahiers: This also amounts to saying that criticism is now contained within the films. With films like *Pierrot le Fou* and *Le Testament d'Orphée* it is as though there were two columns, one of images, the other of comments explaining the significance of the images.

Godard: The commentary on the image forms part of the image. One could imagine criticism similar to Michel Butor's novels, which are more or less critical commentaries on events. The criticism would be the dialogue of the film, with photographs and comments: the whole thing would comprise a critical analysis of the film.

Cahiers: This is more or less the principle of Borges's stories: start with an existing text or story, and retell it in another way. This is adaptation: you would no longer explain what a work is like, but create another, on or alongside it.

Godard: Not entirely, because the best way of explaining *Le Testament d'Orphée* remains, as Truffaut said, giving examples from it. I believe that what one needs today is to be able to say, here is a film, what is good about it and why it is good, by giving examples. Said very simply, like a conversation, a straight dialogue. For a long time criticism was chiefly a matter of written articles preoccupied with problems of style. In *Cahiers*, in any case, whatever the style used in all the genres, there was always a literary side, some seeking after effect. But now I think instructional criticism would be better. Of course, explaining to people why Skolimowski is good isn't easy.

Cahiers: But this becomes more a matter of explaining one's own feelings than the film . . .

Godard: Those feelings are not negligible. If you manage to explain your feelings about a film, you will certainly have talked mainly about your own feelings, but people will have understood and so will go and see the film. The period when I began writing criticism was one of discovery of both the cinema and criticism: it was both our battle and our life. It was an extraordinary coincidence which also occurred at the beginning of the surrealist movement: writing for them was part of their way of life, everything blended in a sort of totality. It was no longer necessary to make the effort of thought to separate things in order to see which one should give preference to.

Cahiers: Maybe it is this coincidence which has been lost.

Godard: But it recurs; there are periods when it ceases, others when it returns.

Cahiers: For us, now, it remains to defend directors like Straub, Bertolucci, Skolimowski, and this won't be easy.

Godard: Straub will be difficult; Skolimowski easier, at least among the inner circle of film-lovers, though of course very difficult with the traditionalist critics.

Cahiers: Not so easy with the film-lovers. There is something odd about their position. Now that they have understood and acknowledged the American cinema, they don't want to know anything else, and the more the Americans go astray the more intolerant they become.

Godard: Skolimowski is the first to stand up for. In the first place he is the most open. It's a bit like jazz. And it seems to me easier to explain Mingus than Stockhausen, Skolimowski than Straub.

Cahiers: But the problem is too that there are many film-lovers today who like Hawks or Hitchcock, and like them for the reasons you defended, but who reject both your films and those of the young directors we have been talking about. They don't understand any more. They have been told that cinema is *mise en scène* and they parrot this, whereas *mise en scène* today is pure academicism – *The Sandpiper* or *Lord Jim*.

Godard: *The Sandpiper* is a borderline case. It's a real amateur film on a Hollywood scale. A couple of bakers filming each other on Sundays. Super 8 mm.

Cahiers: But one must consider the film-lovers, for whom the film is *mise en scène* pure and simple.

Godard: It isn't *mise en scène* with Minnelli, it's something else: *mise en valeur* (enhancing the value).

Cahiers: For ten years *Cahiers* said that *mise en scène* existed. Now one has to say the opposite instead.

Godard: Yes, it's true. It doesn't exist. We were wrong.

Cahiers: *Mise en scène* and the *politique des auteurs* were valuable as warhorses. But the battle seems to be won. The *politique des auteurs* is all-conquering, even the most recalcitrant critics take it into account without knowing, and even talk of *mise en scène* now.

Godard: The battle continues with some. One must continue to defend the *politique des auteurs* against Chauvet and Charensol,[15] if no longer against the rest. It's like a school: there are the big boys and the little ones, and you can't talk in the same way to both.

Cahiers: If you had to write an article, what would you defend today?

Godard: The films which have most excited me recently are Skolimowski's two films and *The Enchanted Desna*. These are films about which I don't know what to say critically, which give me the feeling of having a lot to learn.

Also Rossellini's film about steel. They are films which cut right through me; whereas with others I can see what to take and what to leave. I say this is great, but I could never do it myself. I don't rate these three films above or below the rest, they are films I want to talk about because I don't really know what should be said. On the other hand I know very well what to say about *Gertrud*: I don't mean that I would necessarily be right, but I can say at once that it is like Beethoven's last quartets. Whereas with films like *Walkover*, I want to talk about them precisely in order to discover what to say. But as I make films, I can look for anything I need to find in a film: I don't need to talk about it.

Cahiers: Do you see any connection between your films and Skolimowski's?

Godard: No. Or rather, a lot and none at all. What I like is the way he switches constantly back and forth from the particular to the general. He describes the individual and the environment at the same time, and probably does it better than anybody else. In New York, people told him his films were very French. He answered, 'I'm sorry, I'm Polish and I have never set foot in France.'

Cahiers: Do you think these films will be, not great successes, but at least appreciated by a certain audience? Or will they remain completely unknown?

Godard: They are difficult films because they do not conform to either State Cinema or, which comes to the same thing, traditional commercial cinema. They will suffer the same fate as our films. If Straub's film has a parallel it is *Muriel*; so just take a look at what happened to *Muriel*. The New Cinema began by reacting against the old. Now it is completely alone, with its faults, mistakes and merits. It is no longer necessary to proclaim 'I am trying to do what La Patellière and Stevens fail to do.'

Cahiers: It is the people in the industry who understand least about what is new in the cinema. Today it is the poets like Aragon and Pasolini who best understand the cinema of today.

Godard: They don't need to know it, they feel it. Above all, they do not need to place themselves in relation to the cinema, its history, its tendencies. Because that's it. The New Cinema, which began as a cinema of references, has moved on, because it now poses the problem of criticism itself, and this is very troublesome for film critics who are obliged to keep on placing themselves in relation to the cinema as a whole. Of course the exercise of criticism is much more interesting where there is a battle raging. Criticism is the quartermaster general's department, the line of communication between the front and the rear. If the war is over, there is no further need to explain, no necessity for it. Film criticism is almost at the point reached by art and music critics: giving information is not enough, there is nothing to explain, less need to defend or attack.

Cahiers: Perhaps the role of criticism today is simply to clear the ground so that Stockhausen, for instance, can go on being played at concerts. Because the films by young directors which are being discovered in Poland, Germany

and Italy are more or less unknown in France. Which puts the problem on the level of distribution and exhibition. We would all like to make the films we like available, but haven't the means.

Godard: From this point of view a critic like Pierre Rissient,[16] who didn't write particularly well, became an excellent critic by reissuing *The Enforcer* and pointing out that it was directed by Raoul Walsh, not Bretaigne Windust. He is a good distributor-critic. If it is easier than it used to be to make films, to make moving pictures, making a film is just as difficult, whatever the film. But one must get rid of the idea of making a particular film, and just make films. Otherwise one is more a painter or a novelist. Even at its most revolutionary, the cinema is above all civilized.

Cahiers: Perhaps this is because there is a sort of optimism in the cinema. One feels that if Nicolas de Stael[17] had been a film-maker, he might not have killed himself.

Godard: I agree. The cinema is optimistic because everything is always possible, nothing is ever prohibited: all you need is to be in touch with life. And life itself must be optimistic, otherwise everyone in the world would promptly commit suicide.

Cahiers: You often talk about music and painting: why is it that with two exceptions – *Les Carabiniers* and *Une Femme Mariée* – the music in your films is deliberately 'film music'?

Godard: Because I have no ideas about music. I have always asked for more or less the same music from different composers. They all wrote very similar music, more or less, and I always asked in general for what is known as 'film music'.

Cahiers: If one listened to it without seeing the film . . .

Godard: It would be worthless.

Cahiers: Yet you have worked with a young musician, Arthuys, on *Les Carabiniers*.

Godard: That was backwards music, so to speak. I asked Arthuys to try to write the sort of music Juross[18] might imagine if his mind had any musical possibilities at all. It is crude, backward, caveman music. In any case, three-quarters of my films could do without music. I did use music, but if I hadn't, the film would be no different. In *Alphaville*, the music seems to counterpoint, even to deny the images: it has a traditional, romantic feel which belies the world of Alpha 60. Here it is one of the narrative elements – it evokes life, it is the music of the worlds outside. And as the characters often talk of the worlds outside, I use their music instead of filming them. These are sounds which have the value of images. I have never used music otherwise. It plays the same role as black in Impressionist painting.

Cahiers: If the music plays a more important role, then should the musician himself make the film?

Godard: I don't see why Boulez shouldn't make films, just as Guitry did.

Or if one wants to use his music – or Stravinsky's – they should make the film. I would never ask Stravinsky to compose a background score for me. What I need is bad Stravinsky, because if what I use is good, everything I have shot becomes worthless. I can't work with a scriptwriter for the same reason: a musician conceives his music from his own world of music, and I conceive my films from my own world of cinema. One added to the other is too much, I feel. For me, music is a living element, just like a street, or cars. It is something I describe, something pre-existent to the film.

Cahiers: What about colour in *Pierrot le Fou*? For instance, the coloured reflections on the windscreen of the car . . .

Godard: When you drive in Paris at night, what do you see? Red, green, yellow lights. I wanted to show these elements but without necessarily placing them as they are in reality. Rather as they remain in the memory – splashes of red and green, flashes of yellow passing by. I wanted to recreate a sensation through the elements which constitute it.

Cahiers: This is the hand of the painter again . . .

Godard: But I think one can go much further in this direction – without, however, repeating what Butor did in literature. That is too easy to achieve in the cinema. Writers have always wanted to use the cinema as a blank page: to arrange all the elements and to let the mind circulate from one to the other. But this is so easy to do in the cinema. Contrary to what Belmondo says in *Pierrot*, Joyce is of no interest to the cinema. In any case the silent cinema went just as far. We have lost a considerable part of the silent cinema's discoveries, and are only now beginning to rediscover them because we are reverting to simplicity and because the influence of the sound cinema as it was practised is beginning to disappear. The great silent cinema never meant the application of a certain style to a certain event. In my opinion the cinema should be more poetic – and poetic in a broader sense, while poetry itself should be opened out.

Cahiers: One must deal with anything and everything.

Godard: Two or three years ago I felt that everything had been done, that there was nothing left to do today. I couldn't see anything to do that hadn't been done already. *Ivan the Terrible* had been made, and *Our Daily Bread*. Make films about the people, they said; but *The Crowd* had already been made, so why remake it? I was, in a word, pessimistic. After *Pierrot*, I no longer feel this. Yes. One must film, talk about, everything. Everything remains to be done.

110: Speech delivered at the Cinémathèque Française on the occasion of the Louis Lumière Retrospective in January 1966: Thanks to Henri Langlois

At school I learned that Goethe on his death-bed called for more light.[1] It was therefore only logical that some years later Auguste and Louis should invent what we know today as the cinema, and that they should have first demonstrated it in Paris, since that city had long borne their name.

That was seventy years ago – in other words, the period which separates the last Balzac from the first Picasso, the first Matisse from the latest Faulkner: a mere nothing, therefore.

No doubt this was why the worthy industrialist from Lyons told journalists at the time that his invention was one without future.

If, Monsieur the Minister for Cultural Affairs,[2] this evening is placed under your high patronage, it is of course because we all know today what to think of this humble prophecy . . . a prophecy, I feel sure, that Monsieur the Minister of Finance[3] would also find peculiarly modest, since the discovery of a rapport between retinal perception and the Cross of Malta brings in some thirty thousand million, year in year out.

I like to think that seventy years ago, roughly the same number of spectators assembled in the Grand Café as are gathered here tonight. Our slight advantage is that at this moment, 10.35 in the evening, some four hundred million others are doing exactly the same the world over. What are they doing, whether in aeroplanes, in front of television sets, in film societies or in the local cinemas? They are drinking words. They are fascinated by images. Like Alice in front of Cocteau's beloved looking-glass, they are, in other words, wonderstruck.

This possibility for wonderment would be impossible – I say this boldly because one must look things in the face: and the one true lesson taught by Lumière is that a camera has objectives[4] because it is in quest of objectivity – it would be impossible but for people like Henri Langlois.

The cinema, in fact – and hence, doubtless, its popular appeal – is a little like the Third Estate: something which aspires to be everything. But let us not forget that a film is nothing if it is not seen, in other words if it is never projected.

Thanks to Henri Langlois, the films of Louis Lumière are going to exist: the Boston of Edgar Allan Poe, the Paris of Marcel Proust and Claude Monet, many other things and much more, all will depend on you. From the spectator to the screen, said Eisenstein, and from the screen to the spectator. Or Merleau-Ponty: film appeals to our power tacitly to decipher the world and men and to co-exist with them.

So we this evening are about to co-exist with 28 December 1895. Amazing duplex! The wonderful spectacle of a double point of view: historical and aesthetic.

When I say historic, I mean having relation to the history of the cinema.

A distinction is thus usually drawn between Lumière and Méliès. Lumière, they say, is documentary, and Méliès is fantasy. But today, what do we see when we watch their films? We see Méliès filming the reception of the King of Yugoslavia by the President of the Republic. A newsreel, in other words. And at the same time we find Lumière filming a family card game in the *Bouvard et Pécuchet*[5] manner. In other words, fiction.

Let us be more precise and say that what interested Méliès was the ordinary in the extraordinary; and Lumière, the extraordinary in the ordinary.

So Louis Lumière, by way of the Impressionists, was a descendant of Flaubert, and also of Stendhal, whose mirror he took out on the road.

You will understand now why this great inventor refused to talk of a future. The camera was first of all the art of the present; and then it was to bring art closer to life.

But for Henri Langlois, we would not yet know any of this. But for his titanic efforts, the history of the cinema would have remained what it was for Bardèche and Brasillach[6] – souvenir postcards brought back by a pair of amiable but not very serious students from the land of darkened auditoriums.

One can see immediately the revolution that might be effected in the aesthetic of moving pictures by this new vision of its historicity. I shall not dwell on the subject – that is a task for critics.

I will simply say that, thanks to Henri Langlois, we now know – to choose at random – that ceilings do not date from *Citizen Kane* but from Griffith (of course) and Gance; *cinéma-vérité* not from Rouch but John Ford; American comedy from a Ukrainian director; and the camerawork of *Metropolis* from an anonymous French cameraman[7] contemporary with Bouguereau.[8] We now know, too, that Alain Resnais and Otto Preminger have not progressed beyond Lumière, Griffith and Dreyer, any more than Cézanne and Braque progressed beyond David and Chardin: they did something different.

And if my words suddenly take on the tone of a great writer who is well known to you, Monsieur le Ministre, it is quite simply because Henri Langlois has given each twenty-fourth of a second of his life to rescue all these voices from their silent obscurity[9] and to project them on the white sky of the only museum where the real and the imaginary meet at last.

The whole world, as you know, envies us this museum. It is not in New York that one can learn how Sternberg invented studio lighting the better to reveal to the world the face of the woman he loved. It is not in Moscow that one can follow the sad Mexican epic of Sergei Eisenstein. It is here.

Here, too, in this neighbourhood cinema, children come each Sunday to match their youth against that of the cinema's masterpieces. And were Proust to happen by, he would have no difficulty in recognizing Albertine and Gilberte[10] in the young girls sprawling in the front row, thus adding a new chapter to Time Regained.

Thanks to Henri Langlois. My affection and my respect for this man know no bounds. People may feel that I exaggerate for effect. Hardly at all, I assure you. And sometimes I am infuriated by the wretched treatment meted out to this great man of the cinema, without whom we would no more exist than modern painting would have without Durand-Ruel and Vollard.[11]

He is grudged the price of a few prints, whose incredible luminosity will shortly astonish you. He is reproved over his choice of laboratory, whereas no one would dream of haggling over the colours used by the artists of the Ecole de Paris when they repaint the ceiling of the Opéra.

Thanks to Henri Langlois . . . If I have taken the liberty of speaking at greater length than usual, it is because I wished to make public acknowledgement of my debt to Henri Langlois and his faithful staff. Also because I am not alone. Far from it. The ghosts of Murnau and Dovzhenko are seated among you, as much at home here as Delacroix and Manet in the Louvre or the Orangerie.

It is both sad and comforting to reflect that if the Cinémathèque had been what it is today thirty or forty years ago . . . well . . . perhaps Vigo would have consoled himself here after his difficulties with Gaumont and restored his strength; or Stiller after his misfortunes with Garbo, and Stroheim too.[12]

Those of you who have seen the magnificent faces of Lang, Welles, Pickford, Rossellini, touched with emotion during their visits here, will understand what I mean.

For all this, in the name of the young French cinema, and after all, why not, of the whole world, of the technical industries and the actors' union, of camera renters and provincial exhibitors, of suburban filmgoers and Hollywood producers, and of course both Auguste and Louis Lumière, thank you Henri Langlois.

111: The Ten Best Films of 1965

1. *The Enchanted Desna* (Alexander Dovzhenko)
2. *Winter Light* (Ingmar Bergman)
3. *Journal d'une femme en blanc* (Claude Autant-Lara)
4. *Young Cassidy* (Ford-Cardiff)
5. *Shock Corridor* (Samuel Fuller)
6. *Gun Hawk* (Edward Ludwig)
7. *Vidas Secas* (Nelson Pereira dos Santos)
8. *Yoyo* (Pierre Etaix)
9. *Lilith* (Robert Rossen)
10. *The Unworthy Old Peter and Pavla* (Forman-Allio)

112: Letter to the Minister of 'Kultur'

[On the occasion of the banning of Jacques Rivette's *La Religieuse*]

Your master[1] was right. Everything is happening at a 'vulgar and inferior' level. I imagine he was thinking of the princes who govern us when he said this. Luckily for us, since we are intellectuals – you, Diderot and I – our dialogue can take place on a higher plane. I am not very sure in any case, my dear André Malraux, that you will understand a word of this letter. But since you are the only Gaullist I know, you must be the target for my anger.

It is, after all, a fair choice. Being a film-maker, as others are Jews or Blacks, I was beginning to get fed up at having to go to see you to beg you to intercede with your friends Roger Frey and Georges Pompidou[2] for mercy every time a film was condemned to death by that Gestapo of the spirit, censorship. But God in Heaven! I never imagined for a moment that I might have to

do this for your brother Diderot, a journalist and writer like you, and for his *Religieuse*, my sister, a French citizen who humbly begs our Father to protect her independence.

How blind I was. I should have remembered the letter for which Denis was imprisoned in the Bastille.[3] This time, happily, your refusal to see me or to answer the telephone opened my eyes. What I took to be your courage or intelligence when you saved my *Femme Mariée*[4] from Peyrefitte's[5] axe, I now see for what it was, now that you have cheerfully accepted the banning of a work which nevertheless taught you the exact meaning of two inseparable ideas: generosity and resistance. I see now that it was simply cowardice. Don't talk to me of Spain, Budapest or Auschwitz. Everything is happening on an inferior level, as you have already been told. And I will tell you what it is: that of fear.

Were it not so profoundly sinister, it would be profoundly moving and heartening to see a U.N.R.[6] minister in 1966 so afraid of the encyclopaedist spirit of 1789. I am certain now, my dear André Malraux, that you will understand absolutely none of this letter, in which I speak to you for the last time, overwhelmed with hatred. Nor will you be able to understand why I shall be afraid to shake your hand, even in silence, in the future. It is not that your hands resemble those from which the blood of Charonne and Ben Barka[7] can never be effaced. Not at all. Your hands are as pure as Kantism. But he has hands no longer, as Péguy said.[8] So, blind and without hands, with only feet to flee reality, a coward in a word, or perhaps simply old, weak and tired, which comes to the same thing. It is hardly surprising that you do not recognize my voice when I talk to you of assassination in connection with the banning of *Suzanne Simonin, la Religieuse de Diderot*. No. Hardly anything surprises in such extreme cowardice. You have buried yourself like an ostrich in your inner memories. How then could you hear me, André Malraux, who telephone you from outside, from a far country, from Free France?

113: One Should Put Everything into a Film

I don't write my scripts. I improvise as shooting goes on. But this improvisation can only be the result of previous inner preparation, which presupposes concentration. And in fact I make my films not only when I'm shooting but as I dream, eat, read, talk to you.

Deux ou trois choses que je sais d'elle is much more ambitious (than *Made in U.S.A.*), both on the documentary level, since it is about the replanning of the Parisian area, and on the level of pure research, since it is a film in which I am continually asking myself what I'm doing. There is, of course, the pretext of life itself – and sometimes prostitution – in the new housing complexes. But the real purpose of the film is to observe a huge mutation.

For me, to describe modern life is to observe mutations, and not simply to describe, as certain newspapers do, the new gadgets and industrial progress.

Basically, what I am doing is making the spectator share the arbitrary nature of my choices, and the quest for general rules which might justify a particular choice. Why am I making this film, why am I making it this way? Is the character played by Marina Vlady representative of the inhabitants of these housing complexes? I am constantly asking questions. I watch myself filming, and you hear me thinking aloud. In other words it isn't a film, it's an attempt at film and is presented as such. It really forms part of my personal research. It is not a story, but hopefully a document to a degree where I think Paul Delouvrier himself should have commissioned the film.

Actually, if I have a secret ambition, it is to be put in charge of the French newsreel services. All my films have been reports on the state of the nation; they are newsreel documents, treated in a personal manner perhaps, but in terms of contemporary actuality.

To return to this film about the housing complexes, the thing that most excited me was that the anecdote it tells coincides basically with one of my most deep-rooted theories. The idea that, in order to live in Parisian society today, at whatever level or on whatever plane, one is forced to prostitute oneself in one way or another, or else to live according to conditions resembling those of prostitution.

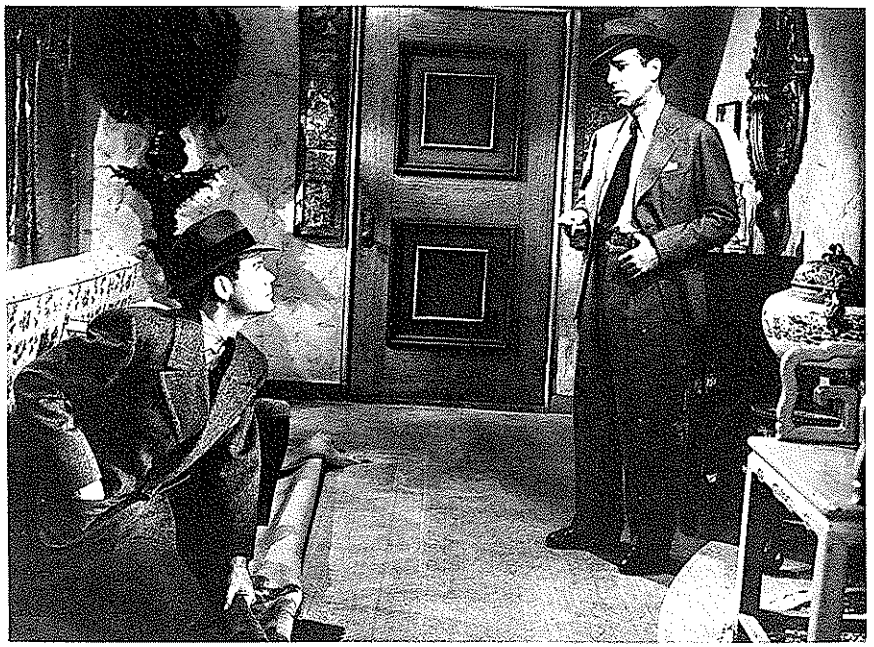
During the course of the film – in its discourse, its discontinuous course, that is – I want to include everything, sport, politics, even groceries. Look at a man like Edouard Leclerc, a really extraordinary man whom I would love to do a film with or about. Everything can be put into a film. Everything should be put into a film. When people ask me why I talk – or have my characters talk – about Vietnam, about Jacques Anquetil, or about a woman who deceives her husband, I refer the questioner to his own newspaper. It's all there. And it's all mixed up. This is why I am so attracted by television. A televised newspaper made up of carefully prepared documents would be extraordinary. Even more so if one could get newspaper editors to take turns at editing these televised newspapers.

This is why, rather than speak of cinema and television, I prefer to use the more generalized terms of images and sounds.

114: My Approach in Four Movements

As I have said, the story of Juliette in *Deux ou trois choses que je sais d'elle* will not be told continuously, because not only she, but the events of which she is part, are to be described. It is a matter of describing 'a complex'.

This 'complex' and its parts (Juliette being the one I have chosen to examine in greater detail, in order to suggest that the other parts also exist in depth) must be described and talked about as both objects and subjects. What I mean is that I cannot avoid the fact that all things exist both from the inside and the outside. This can be demonstrated by filming a house from the outside, then from the inside, as though we were entering inside a cube, an object. The same goes for a human being, whose face is generally seen from the outside.



Karina as Bogart (*Made in USA*) and Bogart as Bogart (*The Big Sleep*)

Deux ou trois choses que je sais d'elle: Marina Vlady

But how does this person himself see what surrounds him? I mean, how does he physically experience his relationship with other people and with the world? (Malraux said: 'One hears the voice of others with the ears, and one's own voice with the throat.') This is something I would like to make people feel throughout the film, and have inherent in it.

If one now analyses this project for a film, one sees that my approach can be divided into four principal movements.

1. *Objective Description*

(or at least attempt at description, Ponge[1] would say)

(*a*) objective description of objects: houses, cars, cigarettes, apartments, shops, beds, TV sets, books, clothes, etc.

(*b*) objective description of subjects: the characters, Juliette, the American, Robert, the hairdresser, Marianne, the travellers, the motorists, the social workers, the old man, the children, the passers-by, etc.

2. *Subjective Description*

(or at least attempt)

(*a*) subjective description of subjects: particularly by way of feelings, that is through scenes more or less written and acted.

(*b*) subjective description of objects: settings seen from the inside, where the world is outside, behind the windows, or on the other side of the walls.

3. Search for Structures
(or at least attempt)
In other words, 1+2=3. In other words, the sum of the objective description and the subjective description should lead to the discovery of certain more general forms; should enable one to pick out, not a generalized overall truth, but a certain 'complex feeling', something which corresponds emotionally to the laws one must discover and apply in order to live in society. (The problem is precisely that what we discover is not a harmonious society, but a society too inclined towards and to consumer values.)

This third movement corresponds to the inner movement of the film, which is the attempt to describe a complex (people and things), since no distinction is made between them and, in order to simplify, people are spoken of as things, and things as people; and I do not neglect conscience, since this is manifest in the cinematographic movement which directs me to these people or these things.

(As Sternberg and his fish would say: I think, therefore the cinema exists.)

4. Life
In other words, 1+2+3=4. In other words, having been able to define certain complex phenomena while continuing to describe particular events and emotions, this will eventually bring us closer to life than at the outset. Maybe, if the film comes off (I hope it will; if not all the time, at least in certain images and certain sounds), maybe then will be revealed what Merleau-Ponty[2] calls the 'singular existence' of a person – Juliette's in particular.

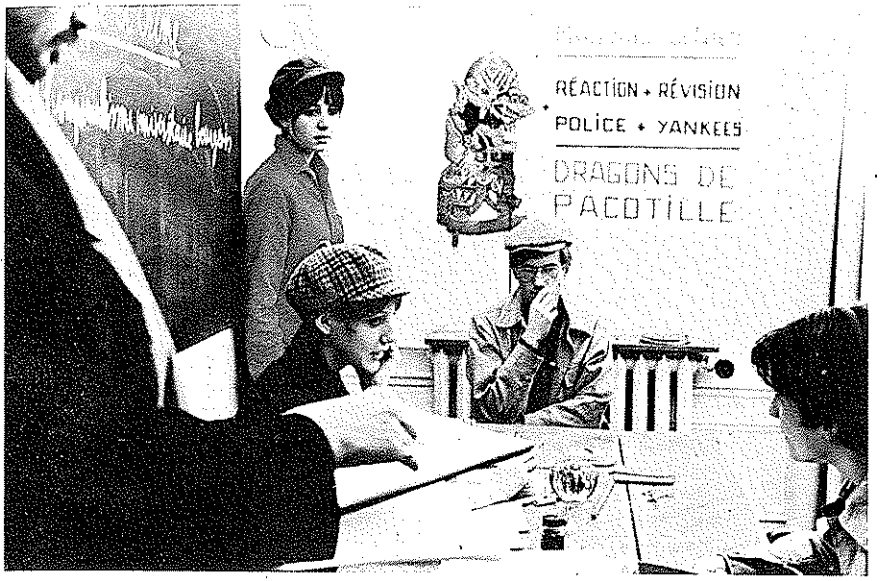
Next, all these movements must be mixed up together.

Finally, I must be able sometimes, not always but sometimes, to give the feeling of being very close to people.

Actually, when I come to think about it, a film like this is a little as if I wanted to write a sociological essay in the form of a novel, and in order to do so had only musical notes at my disposition.

Is this cinema? Am I right to go on trying?

115: Letter to my Friends to Learn how to Make Films Together
I play
You play
We play
At cinema
You think there are
Rules for the game
Because you are a child
Who does not yet know
What is a game and what is
Reserved for grownups
Which you already are
Because you have forgotten



La Chinoise

That it is a child's game
What does it consist of
There are many definitions
Here are two or three
Looking at oneself
In the mirror of other people
Forgetting and learning
Quickly and slowly
The world
And oneself
Thinking and speaking
Odd game
That's life

116: Manifesto
Fifty years after the October Revolution, the American industry rules cinema the world over. There is nothing much to add to this statement of fact. Except that on our own modest level we too should provoke two or three Vietnams in the bosom of the vast Hollywood-Cinecittà-Mosfilm-Pinewood-etc. empire, and, both economically and aesthetically, struggling on two fronts as it were, create cinemas which are national, free, brotherly, comradely and bonded in friendship.

Commentary

by Tom Milne

1: Joseph Mankiewicz
Gazette du Cinéma 2, June 1950.

Dragonwyck (1946) was Joseph L. Mankiewicz's first film as a director after more than fifteen years as a Hollywood scriptwriter. When this article was written in 1950, his reputation, already riding high as a writer-director of great urbanity and intelligence, was about to reach a peak with the brilliant, razor-edged wit of *All About Eve* (1950). Subsequently, films like *Five Fingers* and *The Barefoot Contessa* proved that his camera was not the equal of his pen; he seemed increasingly unhappy in the higher artistic reaches of Shakespeare (*Julius Caesar*, 1953), Graham Greene (*The Quiet American*, 1958) and Tennessee Williams (*Suddenly Last Summer*, 1959); and in his more recent films, *Cleopatra* (1963) and *The Honey Pot* (1967), the intelligence and wit make only sporadic appearances. Godard's admiration lasted longer than most (witness his somewhat defensive defence of *The Quiet American*, p. 81), and several French critics have professed to see Mankiewicz's influence on Godard as a film-maker. Luc Moullet, for instance, suggests in an article in *Cahiers du Cinéma*, April 1960, that Mankiewicz 'partly inspired Godard's renewal of cinema through dialogue and a taste for rapidly shifting construction to a final resolution'.

Conjugal Love and *Ambitions Deceived*, referred to in the text, are the titles of novels by the Italian writer Alberto Moravia (*Amore Conjugale*, *Le Ambizioni Sbagliate*). Godard later adapted one of his novels, *Il Disprezzo*, as *Le Mépris*. In view of the high praise of Mankiewicz implied here by the comparison with Moravia, it is perhaps worth remembering that Godard was to describe *Il Disprezzo* as 'a nice vulgar [novel] for a train journey'.

1. 'dangerous liaisons': A reference to Choderlos de Laclos's famous licentious novel *Les Liaisons dangereuses*, first published in 1782 and still considered scandalous enough in 1960 for Roger Vadim's updated film version to be banned in certain parts of France.

2. 'epistolary form . . . receive news of characters'. Godard's original text reads 'Mankiewicz retrouve alors le sens profond de la nouvelle, qui consiste pour l'auteur à recevoir des nouvelles de personnages qui lui sont chers': an untranslatable pun on *nouvelle* (short story or novella) and *nouvelles* (news).
3. 'Colette Audry': French novelist and playwright who has written a number of film scripts, usually for films directed by her sister Jacqueline.
4. 'André Breton': French writer, founder and chief torch-bearer of the Surrealist movement.

2: Towards a Political Cinema
Gazette du Cinéma 3, September 1950.

While most of Godard's early articles are fairly cryptic, this one is almost impenetrably so, apart from the clarion call of the last sentence. Yet one can see in it, as through a glass darkly, elements of Godard's cinema: the girl trying to suppress her tears in *The Young Guard*, for instance, evokes Nana in the police-station in *Vivre sa Vie*; the camera movement repeated five times in the same film suggests the execution of the partisan girl in *Les Carabiniers*. Above all, the whole impulse of the article, as exemplified by the quotation from Georges Sorel, brings one face to face with the perversely political, and later revolutionary, film-maker of *Le Petit Soldat* and *Week-end*.

Most of the films referred to in this article are Russian: *The Rainbow* (Mark Donskoi, 1944), *Zoya* (Leo Arnstam, 1944), *Ivan the Terrible* (Sergei Eisenstein, 1944–46), *Michurin* (Alexander Dovzhenko, 1947), *The Young Guard* (Sergei Gerasimov, 1947), *The Fall of Berlin* (Mikhail Chiaureli, 1949), and *Battle of Stalingrad* (Vladimir Petrov, 1950). *Hitlerjunge Quex* (Hans Steinhoff, 1933) and *Der Ewige Jude* (Fritz Hippler, 1940), both German, are two of the most notorious Nazi propaganda films, the former anti-communist, the latter anti-Semitic; while Leni Riefenstahl directed the equally notorious *Triumph of the Will* and the Berlin Olympics film of 1936. *Kuhle Wampe*, on the other hand, was notorious as the only German film of that time (1932) to be communist in inspiration. Written by Bertolt Brecht and Ernst Ottwalt, directed by Slatan Dudow, *Kuhle Wampe* (shown in the West as *Whither Germany?*) was an independent German production partly financed by the Russian company Mezhrabpom. Promptly banned on political grounds, it was subsequently passed subject to cuts. The odd film out in this political catalogue is *Rio Escondido*: a Mexican film directed by Emilio Fernandez in 1947, it is a heavy-breathing melodrama with Maria Felix piling on the histrionics as a schoolteacher who devotes her life to conquering illiteracy among the Indians.

1. 'Siegfried . . . Limoges': A reference to Jean Giraudoux's novel *Siegfried et le Limousin* (which he later turned into a play, *Siegfried*). It is about a French soldier (from Limoges) in the First World War who, wounded and amnesiac, is assumed by the Germans to be German and re-educated accordingly. Later, when his true identity is discovered, he is asked to choose between his two countries, France and Germany.
2. 'The beautiful bodies of twenty-year-olds . . .': A line from Arthur Rimbaud's poem, *Les Soeurs de Charité*, which Godard has put into the plural (in Rimbaud's original it reads: 'Le beau corps de vingt ans qui devrait aller nu').
3. 'Hermione': in Racine's *Andromaque*. Hermione, loved by Orestes, is hopelessly in love with Pyrrhus, who loves Andromache, whose insistence on remaining faithful to the dead Hector sparks off the holocaust of the play.
4. 'Rastignac . . . Julien Sorel': The first is a character in Balzac's *Le Père Goriot*, the second in Stendhal's *Le Rouge et le Noir*.
5. 'Soviet economy plans': A joke lost in translation, since the French for 'shot' is 'plan'.
6. 'Brice Parain': A contemporary French philosopher, particularly concerned with problems of language, once described by Sartre as a man who is 'word-sick and wants to be cured'. He later made a personal appearance in *Vivre sa Vie* as the philosopher who talks to Nana in the café about truth, error and the problems of linguistic communication.
7. 'Georges Sorel': French social philosopher (1847–1922). Largely self-taught, he was a follower of the Anarchist philosophy of Proudhon and Bakunin, denying the concept of progress and instead advocating a 'heroic conception of life'. At first on the Left as a champion of

the Syndicalist cause, he later veered to the extreme right-wing nationalism of *l'Action française*. The Fascist movements in Germany and Italy were inspired by his system of a Corporate State, and by his idea of a heroic myth used to arouse public opinion.
8. '*Germany Year Zero*': Roberto Rossellini's 1948 film, *Germania, Anno Zero*, is set in the ruins of Berlin after the Second World War. The protagonist is a twelve-year-old boy who is driven by the chaos round him to delinquency, patricide, and finally suicide.
9. 'Philippe Henriot': Executed as a Nazi collaborator after the liberation of Paris in 1944. In the 1930s, as Deputy for Bordeaux, Henriot had been one of the leading anti-Semitic witch-hunters in the Stavisky affair; in the 1920s, at a time when the conflict between the Catholic militants (right wing) and anti-clericalists (left wing) had a distinct political bias, he was one of the chief spokesmen for the National Catholic Federation.
10. 'Danielle Casanova': A heroine of the French Resistance during the Second World War.

3: *Que Viva Mexico!*
Gazette du Cinéma 4, October 1950.

Various shorts and features have been compiled out of the vast quantity of material shot by Eisenstein in Mexico over a period of seventeen months in 1930–31 for his uncompleted *Que Viva Mexico!* The best known are *Thunder Over Mexico* (supervised by Sol Lesser, 1933), *Time in the Sun* (supervised by Marie Seton, 1940), and *Study for a Mexican Film by Eisenstein* (compiled by Jay Leyda, 1957), this last being a four-hour assemblage of rushes which comes closest to Godard's ideal of putting 'the pieces end to end'. I can trace no record of this Kenneth Anger version.

4: *Works of Calder* and *L'Histoire d'Agnès*
Gazette du Cinéma 4, October 1950

The point Godard is making in comparing these two short films is that whereas *Works of Calder* (produced by Burgess Meredith and directed by Herbert Matter) allows Calder's mobiles to speak for themselves, *L'Histoire d'Agnès* uses the paintings of Goetz as a pretext for a 'clever' literary exercise. The chief interest in this article, however, is the reference to Francis Ponge, who was to become a central influence when Godard began to make his close analysis of the consumer society in *Une Femme Mariée* ('a film where subjects are seen as objects') and *Deux ou trois choses que je sais d'elle*. Ponge's artistic purpose, set out in a volume of prose poems published in 1942 under the title of *Le Parti Pris des Choses* (difficult to translate, but roughly 'The Things' View of It'), was to get back to the basic task of the poet: the naming of things, or to put it another way, the treatment of objects as subjects.

5: *La Ronde*
Gazette du Cinéma 4, October 1950.

Another slightly cryptic article in which Godard seems to be having trouble with the balance between style and content. He was evidently, and quite justifiably, disappointed with *La Ronde* on the grounds that Max Ophuls had sweetened and softened his Viennese original (Arthur Schnitzler's play *Reigen*, written in 1897), turning Schnitzler's acid social satire into fluffy, artificial Marivaudage without capturing the darker feeling that underlies the airy surface of Marivaux's plays. The fact remains that, on its own level, *La Ronde* is a film of dazzling technical virtuosity, doing little to damage Ophuls's reputation as the master of cinematic elegance; but Godard seems to have been too busy with oblique puns and jokes to do justice to a director he admires and elsewhere celebrates. There are several approving references in this book to *Lola Montès*, *Caught* and *The Reckless Moment*; *Le Plaisir* figures at the top of Godard's list of 'The Six Best French Films Since the Liberation'; and there is even a small homage to *Le Plaisir* in Godard's short film, *Charlotte et son Jules*, when Jean-Paul Belmondo angrily says he will pretend not to hear his girl's excuses 'like that actor when Simone Simon tells him she is going to jump out of the window in some film or other'.

Sacha Gordine was the producer of *La Ronde*, the reference here evidently being to the fact that Sacha Guitry was the supreme French exponent of brittle sexual comedy. Beyle, of course, is Stendhal, and the allusion is to the treatment of love in their writings by Stendhal and Marivaux. Odette Joyeux, who played 'The Grisette' in *La Ronde*, had played the title-role in Claude Autant-Lara's *Douce* seven years earlier ('*douce*' meaning 'sweet' or 'gentle'). The poet she meets in the film is played by Jean-Louis Barrault, at that time established with his wife Madeleine Renaud and their theatrical company at the Marigny Theatre in Paris. The 'two . . . worst actors in the French cinema' encountered by Simone Signoret in her role as the prostitute are Serge Reggiani and Gérard Philipe. The two lines quoted at the end are from a poem by Louis Aragon:

Méfie-toi Jessica
Au biseau des baisers
Les ans passent trop vite
Evite, évite, évite
Les souvenirs brisés.

All five lines are quoted by an off-screen voice during the scene in *A Bout de Souffle* where Jean Seberg and Belmondo are in a cinema watching a Western which we hear but never see.

6: *Panic in the Streets*
Gazette du Cinéma 4, October 1950.

Godard is not strictly accurate here. *Boomerang* (1947) was Elia Kazan's third film in Hollywood. Previously he had made *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* (1944) and *Sea of Grass* (1947).

7: *No Sad Songs for Me*
Cahiers du Cinéma 10, March 1952.

8: *Strangers on a Train*
Cahiers du Cinéma 10, March 1952.

Although Godard is as devoted an admirer of Hitchcock as most of the New Wave directors (in particular the *Cahiers du Cinéma* group), he cannot be said to be Hitchcock-influenced in the way that Claude Chabrol or François Truffaut clearly are. There is, however, one charming parody-homage in the scene in *Une Femme Mariée* where the married woman and her lover meet in prearranged seats in the cinema at Orly Airport before proceeding severally, and with extreme caution, to an hotel room. The poster outside the cinema announces Hitchcock's *Spellbound*; a portrait of Hitchcock looms in close-up on screen as she enters the cinema; and the whole sequence, with its menacing close-ups of hovering hands and pausing feet as the lovers slink about in dark glasses and resort to elaborate subterfuges to avoid detection, is clearly an affectionate parody of Hitchcockian thriller techniques.

On the other hand, the Hitchcockian lesson – that any narrative must be taut, logical and clear – seems to have worked admirably on Godard as a writer. His review of *Strangers on a Train* (together with the interview-reportage on Eric Rohmer's *Les Petites Filles Modèles*) is by far the most cogent of Godard's articles until he returned to critical writing in 1956, after a four-year absence, with a new maturity and even more cogency in his reviews of *The Man Who Knew Too Much* and *The Wrong Man*.

1. 'Yvette Guilbert and Jannings': One of Yvette Guilbert's rare film appearances was in Murnau's *Faust* (1926) where, abandoning the long black gloves which became her trade-mark as a *diseuse*, she played the sluttish Dame Martha. Her sequence, an amorous interlude with Mephistopheles (Jannings), was handled by Murnau as broad comedy.

9: Defence and Illustration of Classical Construction
Cahiers du Cinéma 15, September 1952.

The original title of this article (echoing the famous *Défense et Illustration de la Langue Française*, a treatise by the sixteenth-century poet, Joachim du Bellay) is 'Défense et Illustration du Découpage Classique'. *Découpage* is a difficult word to translate, usually rendered in multilingual vocabularies as either 'scenario' or 'shooting script'. 'Scenario' is misleading, since it

usually implies no more than a story outline; 'shooting script' is better, but still not entirely satisfactory. The key idea in *découpage* – literally 'cutting-up' – is the break-down into scenes or shots, and their juxtaposition. Thus, one can talk about the *découpage* of a comic strip. I have used 'construction' as a compromise, since English film vocabulary offers no word to serve as a link between the script and editing stages.

Essentially, the article is an attack on – or rather, a corrective to – André Bazin's anti-montage theories. Bazin had divided film-makers into two groups: those who believed in reality, and those who believed in the image (i.e. everything – décor, lighting, montage, etc. – which serves to heighten reality). Directors like Eisenstein and Gance, he argued, create an image of an event, impose their idea of it, through montage; while others, like Stroheim, Murnau, Dreyer and Flaherty, *show* the event itself, using montage only to edit out unnecessary material. He cites the example of the seal-hunt in *Nanook of the North*, where Flaherty, instead of alternating shots of Nanook and the seal (as, say, Eisenstein would have done) films the whole sequence in one continuous take. Renoir, for Bazin, was the successor to the Stroheim, Murnau, Dreyer, Flaherty group; and in his use of such devices as deep focus and longer takes to minimize the role of montage, he was followed by Wyler, Welles, Visconti, Rossellini, and of course the whole Italian neo-realist movement.

Hence Godard's attempt to define a quite different reason for Renoir's use of deep focus; his amalgamation of Bazin's two distinct groups of film-makers as 'Gance, Murnau, Dreyer or Eisenstein'; his annexing of the ten-minute take to the montage team; his rejection of the famous kitchen scene in *The Magnificent Ambersons* (singled out for praise by Bazin because it was done in one shot), in favour of the mysterious aura Welles creates round, or draws from, Anne Baxter's face in the film. Defining a totally different (and much less categoric) conception of cinema and its historical continuity, Godard proposes his 'découpage classique' as an alternative to either Eisenstein montage or Zavattini neo-realism.

1. 'Sartre . . . Mauriac': Originally published in magazine form in 1939, Sartre's attack on Mauriac – 'M. François Mauriac et la Liberté' – is included in *Situations I* (1947).
2. '*Madame Bovary*': Although Gregg Toland received most of the critical plaudits for introducing and developing deep-focus effects in *Citizen Kane* and *The Little Foxes* (both 1941), Jean Renoir had already pioneered a deep-focus style in the early thirties, most notably in *Boudu sauvé des eaux* (1932) and *Madame Bovary* (1934).
3. 'Otto Preminger': Oddly enough, Godard never seems to have had occasion to write about Preminger and Hawks (cited a little further on), two of his favourite American directors along with Hitchcock. He went some way towards making amends in *Made in USA*, which is remotely inspired by Hawks's *The Big Sleep*, with Anna Karina in the Humphrey Bogart role, and contains various allusions to Preminger films. The sinister Dr Korvo, for instance, is named after the José Ferrer character in *Whirlpool* (known in France as *Le mystérieux Docteur Korvo*); a loudspeaker hopefully pages 'Daisy Kenyon'; and the villainous M. Typhus is reported as having been killed by a private detective called Mark Dixon (from *Where the Sidewalk Ends*, known in France as *Mark Dixon, Détective*). In *Alphaville*, incidentally, Lemmy Caution is reading *The Big Sleep*; in *Pierrot le Fou*, Pierrot refers to Marianne as 'My Girl Friday'; and in *Vivre sa Vie*, Anna Karina walks the streets past a poster for *Exodus*.
4. 'Daniels . . . Dempster': Bebe Daniels, one of Paramount's top stars in the silent days, graduated from slapstick with Harold Lloyd to light comedy with De Mille; Carol Dempster succeeded Lillian Gish as D. W. Griffith's leading lady.
5. 'ten-minute take': What Godard actually wrote, in English, was 'ten minutes shot'.
6. 'Maurice Schérer': i.e. Eric Rohmer, in an article on Renoir's American films, *Cahiers du Cinéma* 8, January 1952.

10: What is Cinema?
Les Amis du Cinéma 1, October 1952.

1. 'Aragon': Louis Aragon is a name which turns up frequently – and with approval – in Godard's early work. In the short film *Une Histoire d'eau*, the narrator tells an engaging story about a lecture on Petrarch delivered by Aragon at the Sorbonne, prefacing it with a characteristic Godard line: 'Here, I open a parenthesis' (whereupon, equally characteristically, Godard has

her open the car door), 'Everyone despises Aragon, but I like him, close parenthesis' (she shuts the car door). In *A Bout de Souffle*, one of Aragon's poems is quoted (see section five, note). In *Le Petit Soldat*, Bruno cites as his reasons for loving France, 'Joachim du Bellay and Louis Aragon'. By the time of *La Chinoise*, however, the tone has changed. As Véronique acidly remarks, discussing her severance from the French Communist Party, 'Sartre has taken refuge in Flaubert, and Aragon in maths.'

Le Libertinage was published in 1924, when Aragon was closely associated with the Dadaist and Surrealist movements. Three years later he joined the Communist Party; and three years after that, broke completely with the Surrealists to devote himself to militant writing.

11: *Les Petites Filles Modèles*
Les Amis du Cinéma 1, October 1952.

Eric Rohmer, with whom Godard was associated as co-editor of *La Gazette du Cinéma* and under whose direction he appeared as an actor (in *Présentation ou Charlotte et son Steack* and *Le Signe du Lion*), was an editor of *Cahiers du Cinéma* from 1957 to 1963. For Godard, he wrote the script of *Tous les garçons s'appellent Patrick*.

The *Journal d'un Scélérat* which Godard refers to was Rohmer's first film, a 16 mm short. *Les Petites Filles Modèles* would have been his first feature, but was never completed. It was seven years before he did actually make a feature, *Le Signe du Lion* – one of the first manifestations, along with *Le Beau Serge*, *Les Cousins*, *Les Quatre Cents Coups* and *A Bout de Souffle*, of the Nouvelle Vague. *Le Signe du Lion*, though a remarkable film, was a commercial disaster; Rohmer retreated into television, and it was another seven years before he re-emerged as a major film-maker with *La Collectionneuse* (1966) and *Ma Nuit Chez Maud* (1969).

One of Rohmer's early critical articles for *Cahiers du Cinéma* (10, March 1952), written under the name of Maurice Schérer, was called 'Isou ou les choses telles qu'elles sont'. This was a qualified defence of Isidore Isou, the arch-priest of 'Lettrisme', a literary fad which earned some publicity in Paris in the late forties and was neatly described by Rohmer as being 'to the left of Surrealism'. Pushing Surrealism to *reductio ad absurdum* limits, Isou sought, in effect, the dissolution of the word; or the image, in the case of his one film, *Traité de Bave et d'Eternité* (1951, 'A Treatise on Drivel and Eternity').

The Comtesse de Ségur was a well-known and prolific nineteenth-century author of children's books, mostly tales of moral uplift. Her books were published in Paris by Hachette, in a series called the 'Bibliothèque Rose Illustrée'. The film *Les Malheurs de Sophie*, adapted from another of her novels by Pierre Laroche and Colette Audry, and directed by Jacqueline Audry (her first feature), was made in 1945. The first half of the film was tolerably faithful to the original, but the second drifted into pure invention.

1. 'E.T.P.C. or I.D.H.E.C.' Respectively, the school of photography and the film school in Paris: École Technique de Photographie et de Cinématographie, and L'Institut des Hautes Études Cinématographiques. The former was replaced in 1964 by the Centre National Louis Lumière de Photographie, Cinématographie et Télévision.
2. 'Serafin': Enzo Serafin was Antonioni's cameraman on his first three features: *Cronaca di un Amore* (1950), *I Vinti* (1952) and *La Signora senza Camelie* (1953).

12: *The Lieutenant Wore Skirts*; *Artists and Models*
Cahiers du Cinéma 62, August–September 1956.

A number of references in Godard's films bear witness to his attachment to the Hollywood cartoon: in *Le Grand Escroc*, Jean Seberg says to Laszlo Szabo (the Police Inspector), 'You look more like Loopy the Loop than a police officer', while Szabo subsequently imitates Sylvester (of 'Sylvester and Tweetie Pie'); in *Bande à part*, Sami Frey remarks, apropos of nothing in particular, 'I am Loopy the Loop, the Good Wolf'; in *Made in USA*, Szabo again imitates Sylvester in the sequence in the garage with Anna Karina.

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that Godard should be such a devoted admirer of Frank Tashlin, who started in Hollywood as a cartoon-animator and director, then graduated to live features (notably with Jerry Lewis) but never lost his taste for sight gags based on eccentricities or impossibilities. On occasion, Godard's own humour owes a good deal to Tashlin: the

business with the bicycle, or the tossed egg which descends minutes later, in *Une Femme est une Femme*; the flight through the Louvre in *Bande à part*; the slot-machine in *Alphaville* which invites Lemmy Caution to put a coin in, then nonchalantly spits out a card saying 'Thanks!'

1. 'Billy Wilder': Presumably Godard drags Wilder in because a number of critics at the time commented adversely on Tashlin's film – which contains a brief parody of a scene from *The Seven Year Itch* – as little more than an overt attempt to cash in on the success of *The Seven Year Itch*, with Tom Ewell repeating a not dissimilar role.
2. '*Bouvard et Pécuchet*': Flaubert's unfinished and posthumously published novel, which is about two solemn petty bourgeois who are determined to master every field of knowledge in turn; their efforts build up into a satirical catalogue of failure. In *Deux ou trois choses que je sais d'elle*, Godard borrows the names of Bouvard and Pécuchet for the two young men seated behind piles of books at a table in the Elysée-Marbeuf café sequence: while Juliette's husband flirts with a pretty girl, they are seen busily reading and copying extracts from the books, which are in a variety of languages and about a variety of subjects.
3. '*Pim, Pam, Poum*': A French comic strip.

13: *The Man Who Knew Too Much*
Cahiers du Cinéma 64, November 1956.

1. 'Zig . . . Puce . . . Dolly': Characters in the comic strip *Zig et Puce*.
2. 'Che sera, sera': The song ('What will be, will be') sung by Doris Day in the film, much commented on by French and other critics oriented to Hitchcock's 'religious thinking'.
3. 'Stavrogin': In *The Possessed*.

14: Montage my Fine Care
Cahiers du Cinéma 65, December 1956.

Much more lucid than the earlier 'Defence and Illustration of Classical Construction' (which labours somewhat over its pastiche eighteenth-century style), this is a particularly interesting article in view of Godard's development as a film-maker: his increasing abandonment of formal narrative in favour of the instantaneous and the unexpected; his interest in improvisation for the secret, unguarded moment it may seize from an actor; his use of montage – or, more correctly, the lack of montage, the refusal to cut away – to emphasize a moment captured almost by chance; his increasing experimentation, especially in *Vivre sa Vie* and *Le Mépris*, with the lengthy, unedited sequence shot. The second paragraph, in which Godard talks about conveying a moment of hesitation, might almost be a definition of his stylistic approach to *Une Femme est une Femme*; or the third paragraph – 'by making the look a key piece in his game' – of his method in *Vivre sa Vie*. The title of this article, 'Montage mon beau souci', is borrowed from the title of a novella by Valéry-Larbaud, '*Beauté mon beau souci*'.

1. '*Alexander Nevsky . . . The Navigator*': Eisenstein, the arch-prophet of montage, sacrificed the needs of the actor (or character) to the needs of the film. Buster Keaton films, on the other hand, rarely cut away from the central character in action sequences. This may have been because Keaton really did perform his own fantastic acrobatics and wanted audiences to know it; but it does mean that the action sequences in his films build to an extraordinary dramatic effect – without benefit of montage.
2. 'Marguerite Renoir': Active in the French cinema since the thirties, Marguerite Renoir worked on most of Renoir's films from *La Chienne* to *La Règle du Jeu*, and all of Jacques Becker's films.

15: Future, Present, Past: Magirama
Cahiers du Cinéma 67, February 1957.

Nelly Kaplan, a young Argentinian film enthusiast, was driven by her admiration for Abel Gance's work to come to Paris from Buenos Aires in 1953 expressly in order to meet, and if possible work with, him. Gance had not made a film since 1942, and, discouraged by the French film industry's lack of interest (though he was able to make *La Tour de Nesle* in 1954) had abandoned his experiments with polyvision (three separate images on three screens), with which

he had been toying since he first used the device in *Napoléon* in 1926–27. Encouraged and stimulated by Nelly Kaplan, who became his assistant, Gance set to work again, and the results of their collaboration were seen in December 1956 in a programme collectively entitled 'Magirama' and comprising polyvized scenes from the sound version of Gance's own *J'Accuse*, and three short films: *Auprès de ma blonde*, *Château de nuages*, *Fête Foraine*. Despite an enthusiastic Press – Nelly Kaplan being dubbed 'the good fairy of polyvision' by *Paris-Match* – the programme lasted only two weeks at the Studio 28, and that was effectively the end of polyvision. *Au Royaume de la Terre* was never made, and Gance's only two subsequent films, *Austerlitz* (1960) and *Cyrano et d'Artagnan* (1963) were shot in normal widescreen ratios.

Nelly Kaplan, whose tireless efforts to publicize Gance's work included a TV programme which she scripted and a documentary called *Abel Gance – Hier et Demain*, was subjected to a good deal of understandable but rather unfair ridicule of the sort which underlies Godard's article and which assumed that she was infatuated with Gance and his work. This may have been so, but her personal vindication came at the 1969 Venice Festival with the première of her first feature, *La Fiancée du Pirate*, a highly professional piece of work revealing considerable talent.

1. 'a better label': In Balzac's novel the student *pensionnaires* of Madame Vauquer's establishment, inspired by the current show-business vogue for 'dioramas' and 'panoramas', use 'rama' as an all-purpose suffix in making witty conversation.
2. 'André Citroën': Founder of the French car manufacturing firm which was bought up by the Michelin Tyre Company when he went bankrupt in 1934.

16: *Hot Blood*
Cahiers du Cinéma 68, February 1957.

Enough has been written about the – to some Anglo-Saxon critics – puzzling enthusiasm of the French in general, and Godard in particular, for the work of Nicholas Ray and Samuel Fuller to make it unnecessary to repeat the arguments here. If anyone still doubts the influence of Fuller on Godard, he need only look at, say, *The Crimson Kimono* in conjunction with *Made in USA*, to see how much of Fuller's visual style persists in Godard. Ray's influence is more difficult to define, but is undoubtedly there in his abrupt editing style and in his attempt to seize his characters in their most revealing, off-guard moments. Not for nothing did Godard dedicate *Made in USA* to 'Nick et Samuel, qui m'ont élevé dans le respect de l'image et du son.' (To Nick and Samuel, who taught me respect for image and sound.)

Fuller turns up in person in *Pierrot le Fou* to offer his definition of cinema; Ray is present in spirit when Belmondo is reconciled to letting the maid go to the cinema for the third time in one week because *Johnny Guitar* is showing ('She must educate herself'). And, interestingly, Godard's admiration for Ray's work survives his Maoist break with America and all things American. Henri, in *La Chinoise*, comments on a Communist newspaper's dismissal of *Johnny Guitar* on the grounds that it is American. It is a good film, he insists, but . . . as Malraux says, 'liberty does not always have unsullied hands'.

1. 'Van Dongen': Kees Van Dongen, Dutch painter who settled in Paris, joined Les Fauves in 1905, and became a highly successful society portraitist.

17: *Courte Tête*
Cahiers du Cinéma 70, April 1957.

Godard's persistent though guarded championship of Norbert Carbonnaux's films never really paid any dividends. Entering the industry as a scriptwriter in 1946, Carbonnaux directed his first film, *Les Corsaires du Bois de Boulogne*, in 1953, and was promptly hailed as the white hope of French comedy. He maintained the promise through *Courte Tête* and *Le Temps des œufs durs*; but when he reached out after the higher things Godard hoped for with *Candide* (1960), an updated version of Voltaire's novel, he came an unhappy cropper. His films since then, such as *Le Gamberge* and *Toutes folles de lui*, have been routine.

1. 'co-director': Whether or not Godard is correct in suggesting that Carbonnaux co-directed – 'more or less' – these two films, they are credited respectively to Guy Lacourt and André Pellenc.

2. 'salt': Godard's original is an untranslatable pun on Annette Poivre's name: *poivre* means 'pepper'.
3. 'the Annette of *Rue de l'Estrapade*': Annette Wademant, who co-scripted the film with Jacques Becker, as well as the earlier *Edouard et Caroline*.
4. 'Companeez': Jacques Companeez, the veteran French scriptwriter. He and Carbonnaux collaborated on *Les Requins de Gibraltar*, 1947, among others.
5. '*Cette Sacrée Gamine*': A Brigitte Bardot vehicle directed by Michel Boisrond; seen in England as *Mam'zelle Pigalle* and America as *That Naughty Girl*.
6. 'Carlo Rim': The film referred to is *Les Truands* (*Lock Up the Spoons*), 1956.
7. 'Marceau': The mime Marcel Marceau.
8. '*Mariage Forcé*': Written in 1664, *Le Mariage Forcé* is what one might call a 'promising' Molière comedy, whereas *Les Femmes Savantes*, written eight years later, is one of his acknowledged masterpieces.

18: Dictionary of French Film-makers
Cahiers du Cinéma 71, May 1957.

1. '*Rue Caumartin . . . Rue de l'Estrapade*': Though italicized as a title in the original text, there is no such film as *Rue Caumartin*. The Rue Caumartin in Paris is an ordinary bank-and-business street, and the point Godard is making seems to be that Carbonnaux is more straightforwardly commercial in his comedy than Becker, whose *Rue de l'Estrapade* reproduces the airy, bustling sense of life as it is lived which he caught so delightfully in both *Edouard and Caroline* and *Falbalas*.
2. 'for a place . . .': i.e. not very highly. Both Alex Joffé and Michel Boisrond are routine commercial directors, although their early films did reveal flickers of individuality.
3. 'subtle film theoretician': Although he is probably best known today for his numerous short films and two intelligent features, *Les Dernières Vacances* (1947) and *Le Rendez-vous de minuit* (1961), Roger Leenhardt's true importance lies in his seminal influence as a critic. He began on the monthly *Esprit* in 1935, and was one of the first French critics to appreciate the importance of the American cinema. André Bazin, who eventually took over his column in *Esprit*, was in effect his pupil. Leenhardt makes a personal appearance in Godard's *Une Femme Mariée*.
4. 'this moon-man': Godard's better, but untranslatable description was 'Jacques de la lune', a reference to Marcel Achard's play *Jean de la lune*. The protagonist (played by Jouvet on the stage, Michel Simon in the cinema) is a simpleton who is idealistic to the point of imbecility.
5. 'Tristan the Hermit': Tristan l'Hermite, pseudonym of François l'Hermite (1602–55), French poet, playwright and novelist.

19: *The Wrong Man*
Cahiers du Cinéma 72, June 1957.

1. 'Lieutenant Fontaine': The protagonist of Bresson's *Un Condamné à mort s'est échappé*, imprisoned by the Gestapo in Occupied France.
2. 'Poor Clouzot, who still believes in Fantomas': Since this article was written, Feuillade's indestructible arch-fiend has been revived in an indifferent series of films directed not by Clouzot but by André Hunebelle. The reference here is presumably to Clouzot's old-fashioned conception of suspense in general, and to *Les Diaboliques* in particular, where the plot hinges on the crude but effective trick of having a dead man turn out to be very much alive.
3. 'Robert Burks': The cameraman with whom Hitchcock achieved one of his happiest collaborations, ended when Burks died tragically in a fire. With the exception of *Psycho* (shot by Hitchcock's television cameraman, John L. Russell), Burks worked on all of Hitchcock's films from *Strangers on a Train* to *Marnie*, twelve features in all. It is surely no accident that *Strangers on a Train* marks the transition from the slow, fumbling Hitchcock of the late forties (*The Paradine Case*, *Rope*, *Under Capricorn*, *Stage Fright*) to the period of his richest and best work; or that the two films made since Burks's death (*Torn Curtain*, *Topaz*) seem to have lapsed into flatness and hesitancy again.
4. 'dead man on leave': A quotation from Lenin ('We are dead men on leave'), used again in *A Bout de Souffle* in the sequence in the photographer's studio which leads up to Patricia's betrayal of Michel. Godard inserts a close-up of a book, Maurice Sachs's *Abracadabra*, then of a printed band which reads 'Nous sommes des morts en permission.'
5. 'Odile . . . Honorine': Respectively, the heroines of Goethe's and Balzac's *Honorine*.
6. '*Ballet mécanique*': An avant-garde film made by Fernand Léger and Dudley Murphy (1924), which followed the same basic principles as Léger's paintings and was in effect an abstract montage of concrete images (with the emphasis on machinery in movement, but also including faces, kitchen utensils, etc.)

20: *Sait-on jamais?*
Cahiers du Cinéma 73, July 1957.

Whatever the merits of his career as a film-maker, Roger Vadim has two unshakeable claims to fame. First, that he took an almost unknown starlet – Brigitte Bardot – and turned her into a super-star with *Et Dieu . . . créa la femme*. Second, that his first two films (*Et Dieu . . . créa la femme*, 1956, and *Sait-on jamais?*, 1957) stirred up a stagnant film industry by their success and breached the flood-gates for the Nouvelle Vague. Seen today, these two films reveal more flair than talent, but it is a flair which Vadim only rarely recaptured in his subsequent films – notably in *Les Liaisons dangereuses* (1959), *Et mourir de plaisir* (1960) and *Barbarella* (1967). Only a year after writing this cautiously enthusiastic review, Godard sets the Vadim record straight in his review of Bergman's *Summer With Monika*.

1. 'novel': Not mentioned among the film's credits.
2. 'a naughty girl': Referring to the Bardot film, *Cette Sacrée Gamine*, which was scripted by Vadim.
3. 'Laclos': Vadim was to film Choderlos de Laclos's novel, *Les Liaisons dangereuses*, in 1959.
4. '*Action immédiate*': A routine spy thriller in the 'Coplan' series, made in 1956 and starring Henri Vidal, Barbara Laage and Nicole Maurey.

21: *Hollywood or Bust*
Cahiers du Cinéma 73, July 1957.

1. 'Laviron': Jean Laviron, a French director, Professor since 1944 at I.D.H.E.C. (L'Institut des Hautes Études Cinématographiques, the film school in Paris).
2. 'Kanin': Garson Kanin wrote several films for Cukor, but Godard is probably thinking in particular of the Judy Holliday-Jack Lemmon comedy, *It Should Happen to You*.
3. 'Shirley, or Dorothy, or Pat, or Jane': Shirley MacLaine and Dorothy Malone, who appeared in *Artists and Models*; Pat Crowley, from *Hollywood or Bust*; and Jayne Mansfield, from *Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?*

22: *The True Story of Jesse James*
Cahiers du Cinéma 74, August–September 1957.

1. 'Henry King's film': *Jesse James*, 1939.
2. 'the ballad': This is not the ballad from *The True Story of Jesse James*, but the one used in Fuller's *I Shot Jesse James*.
3. 'Jesse James the beloved': The French title of *The True Story of Jesse James* is *Le Brigand bien-aimé* ('The Beloved Bandit').

23: *Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?*
Cahiers du Cinéma 74, August–September 1957.

1. '*Rally Round the Flag, Boys*': This was in fact made by Leo McCarey (1958).

24: *Forty Guns*
Cahiers du Cinéma 76, November 1957.

25: Jean Renoir
Cahiers du Cinéma 78, special Renoir issue, December 1957.

La Nuit du Carrefour
La Nuit du Carrefour was the first Simenon novel to be filmed, followed in the same year, 1932, by *Le Chien Jaune* (director, Jean Tarride) and *La Tête d'un Homme* (director, Julien Duvivier). It was originally to have been directed by Simenon himself, but was entrusted instead to Renoir, who followed his usual practice of filming as much as possible on location and with direct sound recording. The production was beset by money troubles, and whether or not the story about the missing reels is true (though often repeated, it has never been confirmed or denied by Renoir), the result – with both action and dialogue filtering murkily through the prevailing darkness – is an ineffably strange and mysterious thriller, more Simenon than Simenon himself.

Renoir never did make *Trois Chambres à Manhattan*, which was subsequently announced as a project for Jean-Pierre Melville in 1962, but was finally made – very dully – by Marcel Carné in 1965.

1. '*Une Ténébreuse Affaire*': The novel by Balzac.
2. '*Orvet*': One of two plays written by Renoir. It was performed at the Théâtre de la Renaissance, Paris, in March 1955, directed by Renoir himself.
3. '*Suicidés, Touristes de Bananes*': Novels by Simenon.
4. '*Mouchette, Un Crime*': Novels by Georges Bernanos.

Swamp Water
Swamp Water was the first of five films made by Renoir in America during and immediately after the Second World War. The first of these to be shown in France, in 1946, was *This Land is Mine*, followed by *Swamp Water*, *The Diary of a Chambermaid* and *The Woman on the Beach* in 1948, and *The Southerner* in 1950. As in England and America, *The Southerner* alone met with critical approval. Renoir had left France under something of a critical cloud after the failure of *La Règle du Jeu* in the summer of 1939, and it was not until 1952, when an excellent article by Eric Rohmer was published in *Cahiers du Cinéma* 8, that any attempt was made anywhere to come to grips with Renoir's American films.

Godard, incidentally, exaggerates in suggesting that *Swamp Water* was the first Hollywood film to be shot on location, although the practice had certainly become rare since the end of the silent era. Also incidentally: despite the location shooting in the swamps of Georgia, the close-ups in *Swamp Water* rely fairly heavily on back-projections.

Eléna et les hommes
Since Godard introduces the Venus and Olympus metaphor almost too casually in this brilliantly perceptive note about *Eléna et les hommes*, it should perhaps be noted that the same issue of *Cahiers du Cinéma* contained an interview with Renoir in which he explained the genesis of the film: 'For a long time I had been dying to make something gay with Ingrid Bergman. I wanted to see her laughing and smiling on the screen, to enjoy – and to let the public enjoy – that sort of rich sensuality which is one of her characteristics. In other words, I was thinking very much of Venus and Olympus.'

26: *Bitter Victory*
Cahiers du Cinéma 79, January 1958.

1. 'behind the mirror': The French title of Ray's film, *Bigger Than Life*, is *Derrière le miroir* ('Behind the Mirror').

27: The Ten Best Films of 1956
Cahiers du Cinéma 67, January 1957.

28: The Ten Best Films of 1957
Cahiers du Cinéma 79, January 1958.

29: *The Killing*
Cahiers du Cinéma 80, February 1958.

Unlike, say, François Truffaut (who, during his period as a film critic with *Arts*, managed to dismiss Satyajit Ray's *Pather Panchali*, be contemptuous about John Ford, and write a graceless review of Laughton's *Night of the Hunter*), Godard rarely failed to recognize talent. A notable exception is this review of *The Killing*, which duly catalogues the undeniable influences on Kubrick, but fails to note the equally undeniable personality which underlies the film. But then, until *Lolita* at last sowed doubts which were settled by *Dr Strangelove*, *Cahiers du Cinéma* as a whole had pigeonholed Kubrick neatly away as a well-meaning liberal in the Stanley Kramer tradition.

30: Mizoguchi
Arts 656, 5 February 1958

French film critics have always had a weakness for bold antithesis, generally expressed in ringing catch-phrases: as an example, one might cite Roger Leenhardt's singularly unfortunate 'Down with Ford, Long Live Wyler!' One need not, therefore, take very seriously Godard's curt dismissal of Kurosawa as only slightly better than the very run-of-the-mill Ralph Habib. On the other hand, no one with any genuine feeling for cinema could quarrel with his estimation of Mizoguchi as the greatest of all Japanese directors, even if one might think twice about labelling *Ugetsu Monogatari* so categorically as his masterpiece . . . as against *Sansho Dayu*, *Shin Heike Monogatari*, or perhaps one of the many unknown films which have yet to be seen in the West.

1. '*Mizoguchi Monogatari*': i.e. 'Tales of Mizoguchi' (*monogatari* means 'tales' in Japanese).
2. 'Tess of the d'Urbervilles': One of Godard's dream projects – about 1962 – was to film *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* in England with Anna Karina.
3. 'the beautiful Machiko': Machiko Kyo, who plays the ghostly Princess Wakasa.
4. 'brother': Correctly speaking, brother-in-law.
5. 'O'Hama': Godard means Miyagi; O'Hama, still alive at the end, is the brother-in-law's wife.

31: *Caught*
Cahiers du Cinéma 81, March 1958.

For some reason, *Caught* was the only one of Max Ophuls's American films never to be released in France. Hence this exotic newsflash by Godard.

1. 'Marianne': In Marivaux's novel, *La Vie de Marianne*. *Lamiel* is an unfinished novel by Stendhal.

32: *The Wayward Bus*
Cahiers du Cinéma 81, March 1958.

Born in Moscow in 1918, Victor Vicas was educated in Paris, went to America in 1942, and returned to France after the war. He made his first feature, *Weg ohne Umkehr*, in Germany in 1953, and has since directed films of no particular distinction in France (*Double Destin* and *Je reviendrai à Kandara*), Germany (*Herr über Leben und Tod*), Switzerland (*Simplon-Express*) and Britain (*Count Five and Die*). *The Wayward Bus*, made in Hollywood, is probably his best-known and most ambitious work.

1. 'Charles Brackett': The veteran Hollywood scriptwriter who died in March 1969, noted for his long and brilliantly successful writing partnership with Billy Wilder. Latterly he also became a producer; among his most successful productions were *Titanic*, *The King and I* and *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*.

33: *Le Temps des Oeufs Durs*
Cahiers du Cinéma 82, April 1958.

While not exactly inaccurate, a 'satire on failure' is a rather optimistic description of this mildly funny but routine whimsical comedy. It is about a young garage-hand (Darry Cowl) who wins ten million francs in the national lottery. He meets a painter of no talent (Fernand Gravey) who periodically fakes suicide for publicity purposes; falls in love with the painter's daughter (Béatrice Altariba); and contrives to give her father most of the money on the pretext of having

sold some of his paintings. Meanwhile, the garage-owners are after the money to modernize the garage; and complications about counterfeit money result in everybody landing in jail. At the end, their innocence proved, the young couple are left in charge of the modernized garage.

34: *Rafles sur la Ville*
Cahiers du Cinéma 82, April 1958.

Though uneven to say the least, Pierre Chenal's work in the thirties is not entirely negligible, if only because his films often benefited from the admirable casts typical of the French cinema at the time: Harry Baur and Pierre Blanchar in *Crime et Châtiment* (1934), an expressionistic version of Dostoievsky's novel; Blanchar and Isa Miranda in *L'Homme de Nulle Part* (1937), a remake of L'Herbier's *Feu Mathias Pascal*; Pierre Renoir, Jouvet, Dalio, Viviane Romance, Aimos and Gaston Modot, enlivening the laborious *La Maison du Maltais* (1938). After spending the war years in Argentina, where he made several films, Chenal returned to France in 1945, but like so many of the top pre-war directors failed to maintain his position, although *Clochemerle* (1948) was a considerable box-office success.

35: *Montparnasse 19*
Cahiers du Cinéma 83, May 1958.

Montparnasse 19 was originally to have been directed by Max Ophuls, who prepared a script with Henri Jeanson under the title of *Modigliani*. When Ophuls died in March 1957, the project was taken over by Becker, who rewrote the script entirely. It was Becker's last film before the apotheosis of *Le Trou* and, however one looks at it, not a success, even though it is imprinted throughout with his personality. Becker intended the film to be – like *Casque d'or* – an intensely felt love-story in a period setting, but what emerged was disastrously close to the conventional Hollywood tale of the misunderstood genius.

1. 'filming Picasso at work': in *Le Mystère Picasso* (H.-G. Clouzot, 1956).

36: Malraux a Discredit to France?
Cahiers du Cinéma 83, May 1958.

For a time, the name of Malraux was a frequent and admiring reference-point in both Godard's critical writing and his films: a copy of *La Condition Humaine*, for instance, is prominently displayed in *Le Petit Soldat*. Eight months after this article was published, in January 1959, Malraux was appointed as Minister for Cultural Affairs, and gradually the ardent revolutionary novelist and film-maker of the thirties was revealed as an equally ardent Gaullist. This desertion was not likely to endear Malraux to Godard, who finally severed relations in 1966, in his *Letter to the Minister of 'Kultur'*, reprinted later in this volume.

1. 'Gaillard government': The Gaillard government fell in April 1958 (less than a year after the collapse of Mollet's régime). The official Billières is cited because his name gives rise to a typical, untranslatable, joke: Billières rhymes with *œillères* ('blinkers').
2. 'Vél' d'Hiv': The Vélodrome d'Hiver. Keigel's film contains footage of the 1952 Congrès des Témoins du XXe Siècle.

37: Bergmanorama
Cahiers du Cinéma 85, July 1958.

1. 'wonderful summer, end of the holidays, eternal mirage': Godard's original, evocative of the mood of the Bergman films he is particularly concerned with, reads: 'été prodigieux, dernières vacances, éternel mirage'. But these are also the French titles of three films. *Eté prodigieux* is a Russian film directed by Boris Barnet, *Chtche Droe Leto (Generous Summer)*; *Les Dernières Vacances* is Roger Leenhardt's first feature; *Eternel Mirage* is the French release title for Bergman's *Skepp Till Indialand* (*A Ship to India* or *The Land of Desire*).
2. 'Dulac . . . Man Ray . . . Kirsanoff': Three of the leading lights of the French avant-garde movement which had its heyday about 1923–24.
3. 'Eternity at the Service of the Instantaneous': Another of Godard's evocative double meanings. *Instantané* not only means 'instantaneous' but 'snapshot' or 'photograph'.

4. 'homonymous society': The Société des Auteurs et Compositeurs Dramatiques. Godard's point is that a real creator, one who creates equally through script and *mise en scène*, does not need to seek protection by lodging his script for copyright purposes.
5. 'creates . . . out of nothing': This is broadly, but not strictly, true. Of the first seven films Bergman directed, six are based on plays, novels or stories by other writers. Subsequently, of course, both *So Close to Life* and *The Virgin Spring* interrupted his practice of working from his own original scripts.

38: *L'Eau Vive*
Cahiers du Cinéma 85, July 1958.

Although an excellent script by the novelist Jean Giono ('the poet of Provençal') undoubtedly helped, the fact that François Villiers was originally a newsreel-cameraman may explain why *L'Eau vive* – filmed on location over a lengthy period while work was actually in progress on the monumental task of shifting the bed of the River Durance – is by far his best film. His first feature *Hans le Marin*, made ten years earlier in 1948, also had authentic locations (in and around Marseille), but was otherwise a silly melodrama about a Canadian sailor (Jean-Pierre Aumont) who falls in love with a cabaret singer (Maria Montez), is hounded by her gangster protector (Dalio), is succoured by an amorous gipsy (Lilli Palmer), and finally returns to kill his faithless love. Villiers's subsequent films have been equally meretricious.

1. 'Dominici affair for British television': Welles never made the film.
2. 'Ah, you were languishing': The original is 'Hein! vous vous languissiez.' Godard's point is difficult to convey accurately in translation since it depends on tense and sound.
3. 'Pagnol': Like Giono, Marcel Pagnol was noted, as both playwright and film-maker, for his 'Provençal sagas': The *Fanny-Marius-César* trilogy, *Angèle*, *La Femme du Boulanger*, etc.
4. 'Jean de Létraz': Novelist, playwright and scriptwriter (*b.* 1897) of innumerable farces, romances and bedroom comedies.
5. '*Les Anges du péché*': Bresson's first feature, for which Giraudoux wrote the dialogue.
6. '*The Cranes Are Flying*': A 'new look' Russian film of 1957, directed by Mikhail Kalatozov, shot with much (too much) bravura camera movement from the cameraman, Urusevsky.

39: *The Quiet American*
Arts 679, 22 July 1958.

This article contains two particularly striking examples of the cross-fertilization of ideas between Godard the critic and Godard the film-maker. Ideas engendered by one are developed by the other, to a point where one sometimes wonders which came first, the chicken or the egg; whether Godard was inspired to make certain films by ideas raised in his criticism, or whether he made the criticisms in the first place because he had already visualized the film he himself would make.

Here, for instance, in praising Mankiewicz for his literary intelligence, he compares him to Giraudoux but adds the slightly cryptic reservation: 'Writing *Pour Lucrèce* is one thing; filming it is another.' Four years later, as though to provide an illustration of what he meant, Godard announced that he was going to film *Pour Lucrèce* (the project never materialized): 'The cinema is always talked about from the point of view of the images, and at the moment I find myself more interested in the sound. I want to carry this interest to its logical conclusion and simply direct a voice on the screen, show someone more or less motionless on the screen speaking a fine text.'

The second example, on a more mundane level, concerns the actress Giorgia Moll, whom Godard subsequently cast as the multi-lingual secretary in *Le Mépris*, using her as a secret weapon to solve for himself the problem he feared might face *The Quiet American*: dubbing for foreign distribution. In *Le Mépris*, Giorgia Moll has a substantial role which consists almost entirely in translating conversations between the American producer, the German director and the French scriptwriter, so that they can understand each other. The film is thus proof against dubbing, although an unhappy Italian version does exist which has had to invent entirely new dialogue – and an entirely new role – for Giorgia Moll.

1. '*Bella . . . Eglantine* . . . Simon . . . Siegfried': This refers to four novels by Giraudoux: *Bella, Eglantine, Simon le Pathétique* and *Siegfried et le Limousin.*

40: *Summer with Monika*
Arts 680, 30 July 1958.

1. 'The Orangerie': A gallery in Paris (alongside the Jeu de Paume, the Expressionist museum), generally used for special exhibitions.
2. 'precede': Evidently a slip of the pen for 'follow'.
3. 'Love at leisure, love unto death': 'Aimer à loisir, aimer à mourir.' From the poem 'L'Invitation au Voyage' in Baudelaire's *Fleurs du Mal.*
4. 'Louis Marcorelles': A French critic, frequent contributor to *Cahiers du Cinéma.*

41: *Woman in a Dressing-gown*
Arts 680, 30 July 1958.

1. 'acting prize': The best actress prize went to Yvonne Mitchell for her performance as the woman whose slatternly habits drive her husband to infidelity. Incredibly, the film also won the International Critics Award for the best film (Berlin Festival 1957).
2. 'Bardem': Juan Antonio Bardem, the Spanish director who made a considerable impression with his politico-social melodrama, *Death of a Cyclist*, but whose subsequent films have revealed the barrenness of a style based almost exclusively on the shock-cut.

42: *The Pajama Game*
Cahiers du Cinéma 85, July 1958.

A review to be read in conjunction with *Une Femme est une Femme*, the film Godard described as 'the idea of a musical', and in which Karina and Belmondo sketch a dance routine because (says Karina) 'I want to be in a musical with Cyd Charisse and Gene Kelly . . .' 'Choreography by Bob Fosse' (adds Belmondo).

With his quirkily electric routines, radiating almost neurotic energy and *always* telling a story, Bob Fosse is the choreographer of all choreographers most likely to appeal to Godard. As a dancer, he appeared in *Give a Girl a Break, The Affairs of Dobie Gillis, Kiss Me Kate, My Sister Eileen*; among his choreography credits, *My Sister Eileen, The Pajama Game, Damn Yankees, How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* (in absentia, as it were), and *Sweet Charity* (which he also directed).

43: *The Long Hot Summer*
Cahiers du Cinéma 85, July 1958.

1. 'our friend Martin': Since Martin is a name frequently given to donkeys in France (roughly equivalent to the English 'Neddy'), Godard's original ('notre âne Martin') is rather more insulting.

44: Telegram from Berlin
Cahiers du Cinéma 86, August 1958.

1. 'Golden Bear': The annual award for the best film at the Berlin Festival.
2. 'Passe Diable': *La Passe du Diable*, directed by Jacques Dupont. Set in Afghanistan, it is largely a semi-documentary about the horse contests traditional to that country; the Salle Pleyel (i.e. concert-hall) story is about a young man who sacrifices himself to enable his admired elder brother win the contest.
3. 'Radvany remake': *Mädchen in Uniform*, directed by Geza von Radvany; the original version by Leontine Sagan was made in 1931.
4. 'Swiss films': *Es Geschah am Hellichten Tag* (*Assault in Broad Daylight*), directed by Ladislav Vajda; *Angst vor der Gewalt* (*The 10th of May*), directed by Franz Schnyder.
5. 'International Critics Prize': For *Ice Cold in Alex.*
6. 'Norwegian film': Probably *Ut av Mørket* (*Out of the Darkness*). a film about mental disorders directed by Arild Brinchmann; but Arne Skouen's *Ni Liv* (*We Die Alone*) was also shown at the Festival.
7. 'La Loi': Directed by Jules Dassin, *La Loi* (*The Law* or *Where the Hot Wind Blows*) was Lollobrigida's next vehicle. Godard's dire prognostication proved absolutely correct.
8. 'less hellish Brooks': Godard's original reads 'moins infernal Brooks', a reference to Richard Brooks's *Battle Circus*, which was called *Le Cirque Infernal* in France.
9. 'story Indian jailer': *Two Eyes, Twelve Hands*, directed by V. Shantaram.
10. 'Japan prison film': *Sun-ai Monogatari* (*The Story of a Pure Love*), directed by Tadashi Imai.
11. 'Koundouros folly': A Greek film, *Paranomi*, directed by Nikos Koundouros.

45: Jean-Luc Godard Interviews Astruc
Arts 684, 20 August 1958.

Alexandre Astruc is the author of one of the seminal documents in the history of the French New Wave: *Naissance d'une nouvelle avant-garde, la caméra-stylo* (*Birth of a New Avant-Garde, the camera-pen*). Originally published in *Ecran Francais*, 30 March 1948, this article is in effect a call to revolution, arguing that the cinema had at last become a means of expression, a *language*, and that instead of being simply a spectacle, it could 'free itself from the tyranny of the visual, of the image for its own sake, of the immediate and concrete demands of the narrative, to become a means of writing as supple and subtle as the written word'.

Curiously enough, when he came to make his first film, the medium-length *Le Rideau Cramoisi*, in 1952, he seemed to bypass his own theories and delve happily back into the techniques of German Expressionism to produce a stylistic exercise in Poe-Gothic atmosphere which was nothing if not tyrannized by the visual. After *Les Mauvaises Rencontres* in 1955, he began in *Une Vie* (1958) and *La Proie pour l'Ombre* (1960) to evolve a personal style which did have much of the flexibility of the novel in dealing with the undercurrents and the unspoken in human relationships. Both films are remarkable – and better than anything Astruc has done since – but remain marginal to the development of the Nouvelle Vague, to which Astruc's greatest practical contribution is probably that his example (combined with Roger Vadim's more positive commercial success) made producers more willing to take a chance on young directors.

1. 'Louis Delluc Prize': The Prix Louis Delluc, first awarded in 1937, was founded in memory of Louis Delluc who died in 1924, the father of French film criticism and a brilliant film-maker in his own right. It is awarded annually to the most promising film of the year.
2. '*Le Horla*': One of Maupassant's horror stories.
3. '*La Princesse de Clèves . . . L'Education Sentimentale*': By Mme De La Fayette and Flaubert, respectively. Astruc was to film *L'Education Sentimentale* in 1961.

46: Jean-Luc Godard interviews François Reichenbach
Arts 685, 27 August 1958.

Despite all the pious hopes and intentions expressed in this interview, *L'Amérique vue par un Français* (or, as it was eventually called, *L'Amérique Insolite*) is not so very different in approach from the *Mondo Cane* type of sensationalism; not so very different, either, from the short films Godard refers to (made by Reichenbach between 1955 and 1957), except that the emphasis on outlandishness and abnormality becomes more offensive at feature length. Appropriately enough, the film was titled *America Through the Keyhole* for English distribution, and contains all the obligatory scenes of juvenile delinquency, carnival in New Orleans, drum-majorette parades, baby parades, Muscle Beach, etc.

In 1961, Reichenbach made *Un Cœur gros comme ça*, a sympathetic but unexceptional feature in the *cinéma-vérité* manner, recording the thoughts and aspirations of a young coloured boxer who comes to Paris to train for a championship fight (which he loses). His subsequent films have made little impression: *Les Amoureux du 'France'* (1964), for instance, in which a sentimental comedy, set aboard a liner and directed by Pierre Grimblat, was filled out with 'impressions of travel' by Reichenbach; or *L'Indiscret* (1969), in which self-congratulatory shots of the director at work punctuate a routine story.

1. 'qualité': There is a special aid system in France for commercial shorts, which are shown to two selection committees. Any film rejected by one committee is seen again by the other. Films selected may win 'quality' prizes. A special jury determines the prizes, which go to a maximum of fifty films each year.
2. '*Lost Continent*': An Italian film, *Continente Perduto*, made in 1954 by Leonardo Bonzi, Mario Craveri, Enrico Gras, Francesco A. Lavagnino and Giorgio Moser, and dealing with the more exotic aspects of Borneo and the Malay Archipelago.
3. '*Amica America*': A semi-fantasy account of America, published in 1919 by Giraudoux, who was sent there on a diplomatic mission.
4. 'Welles . . . Brazil': i.e. for the uncompleted *It's All True* (1941).
5. 'Rossellini . . . India': i.e. *India 58*.
6. 'Nagra': i.e. a tape-recorder.
7. 'chronicle of events': Godard makes a pun on Reichenbach's phrase 'faits et gestes' (deeds and exploits), picking up the word 'geste' as 'chanson de geste' (the name given to the medieval French verse-chronicles of heroes and heroic deeds).

47: *Une Vie*
Cahiers du Cinéma 89, November 1958.

1. 'Roman Vlad': Roman Vlad wrote the score for *Une Vie*.
2. 'Velazquez grey': A phrase which Godard later recalled in *Le Petit Soldat* where, after his first meeting with Véronique, Bruno's voice is heard off, wondering, 'Are her eyes Velazquez grey or Renoir grey?'
3. 'Ramuz': Charles-Ferdinand Ramuz (1878–1947), a Swiss novelist and poet, noted for his descriptions of peasant life in his native canton of Vaud. He is perhaps best known internationally for his libretto for Stravinsky's *The Soldier's Tale*.
4. '*L'Albatros*': Baudelaire's poem *The Albatross*.
5. '*La Folie du Docteur Tube*': An experimental film directed by Abel Gance in 1915. A fantastic tale of a scientist who discovers a method of decomposing light rays, this was one of the first films to use distorting lenses to create the weird images of madness.
6. 'Orvet': The heroine of Jean Renoir's play of the same name.

48: *Les Cousins*
Cahiers du Cinéma 89, November 1958.

1. 'Rubempré . . . Rastignac': Rastignac is the student hero of *Le Père Goriot*, Rubempré of *Une Etude de Femme* – both novels by Balzac.
2. 'cheating': The word used by Godard is 'tricher', evoking Carné's film *Les Tricheurs*. Made in 1958 and achieving commercial rather than critical success, this was a decidedly Old Wave film masquerading as New Wave in its jazzy tale of rebellious youth: a 'cheat', in other words.
3. 'just how far he has the right to go too far': In Cocteau's *Orphée*, an elderly literary gentleman shows Orphée a copy of a new magazine called *Nudisme*, whose pages are entirely blank: when Orphée, the established poet, complains that it is ridiculous, he is told, 'Your gravest fault is that you know just how far one can go too far.'

49: *Un Drôle de Dimanche*
Arts 698, 26 November 1958.

Noted for the number of young actresses he launched or pushed to stardom – among them Simone Simon and Michèle Morgan – Marc Allégret enjoyed a considerable reputation during the thirties which has since frittered away to nothing. His two most frequently cited films are probably his first, *Voyage au Congo* (a documentary made on a trip to Africa with André Gide in 1926), and *Fanny*, the middle film in Pagnol's famous trilogy; but his best are the charming *Lac aux Dames* (1934, with Simone Simon and Jean-Pierre Aumont), and the equally engaging if slightly melodramatic *Entrée des Artistes* (1938, with Jouvet, Odette Joyeux and Claude Dauphin).

1. 'Jean-Jacques Vital': Formerly a radio producer, Vital formed a film production company – Société Simoja – with Jean Boyer in 1952.
2. '*photo-romans*': A form of strip-cartoon very popular in France and Italy, employing photographs (with the story staged in tableaux by actors) instead of drawings.
3. 'Belmondo': Godard, of course, was to make a star of Belmondo in *A Bout de Souffle*; later, in *Pierrot le Fou*, he also had him do a brief imitation of Michel Simon.
4. 'wilderness . . . Pigalle': A reference to the 1957 film *Le Désert de Pigalle*. Directed by Léo Joannon, it is about a young priest who is sent to the Pigalle district of Paris; his mission, the redemption of prostitutes.
5. 'of the faith': Godard is playing here on the fact that *gentil* means both 'Gentile' and 'gentle' (or nice). His original text reads: 'Vous êtes le plus gentil des cinéastes. Mais les "gentils", autrefois, c'étaient ceux qui n'avaient pas la foi.'

50: Georges Franju
Cahiers du Cinéma 90, Christmas 1958.

1. 'the famous article': 'Le Style de Fritz Lang', published in *CINEMAtographe*, March 1937; revised and reprinted in *Cahiers du Cinéma*, November 1959.
2. 'houseboat': Godard wrote 'climbs the ladder of a suburban swimming-pool', but it is actually a houseboat on the river.

51: B.B. of the Rhine
Arts 700, 10 December 1958.

1. '*Liane – White Slave . . . Liane, Jungle Goddess*': These are both German films.
2. '*imagerie* sheets': Coloured sheets of figures, usually soldiers or fairy-tale characters, designed to be pasted on cardboard and cut out. A popular children's toy in the nineteenth century.
3. '*Treichville*': This was one of the working titles for *Moi, un Noir*, which Rouch shot in and around Abidjan. It is reviewed by Godard on p. 129.

52: Ignored by the Jury
Arts 700, 10 December 1958.

This festival of short films at Tours was the brainchild of an enterprising organization called the 'Journées du Cinéma'. Founded in 1955 by a young critic, André Martin, the main purpose of the Journées was to bring the best in international film production to provincial towns in France – feature films which had either not been shown at all, or had been shown in dubbed or otherwise mutilated versions. After the great success of the previous festival of short films, also held at Tours (when Truffaut's *Les Mistons* was shown but was not a prizewinner), the rule was dropped that only French shorts could be entered in competition.

As so often with people and things he admires, the four directors Godard praises in this article were all to crop up in one way or another subsequently in his films. When the married woman and her lover go to the cinema at Orly Airport in *Une Femme Mariée*, it is a fragment of Resnais's *Nuit et Brouillard* that they see; and on the wall of Robert and Juliette's flat in *Deux ou trois choses que je sais d'elle*, a poster for *Muriel* is prominently displayed. Demy's *Lola* comes in for an affectionate mention in *Une Femme est une Femme*, and again in *Une Femme Mariée*, where Charlotte wonders which film it was in which a sailor took a little girl in his arms and whirled round with her, very slowly. In *Vivre sa Vie*, Nana says proudly that she once appeared in a film with Eddie Constantine (Varda's *Cléo de 5 à 7*, in which Karina, Godard and Constantine all acted in the pastiche silent comedy). Rozier was to have contributed a short sequence to *Une Femme Mariée* – revealing the charms of the 'monokini' – but it was not permitted by the French censor.

1. 'Robert Menegoz's film about Lacq': *Treize à Lagor*, a documentary about the Lacq gas refineries.
2. '*Gestes du Repas*': Directed by Luc de Heusch.
3. '*Dangerous Trades*': *Muzi Nad Zemi*, directed by Bruno Sefranka.

4. 'Mademoiselle de Scudéry': Madeleine de Scudéry (1607–1701), the famous seventeenth-century novelist and *salon* hostess, was also renowned for a game devised in her *salon* called 'La Carte de Tendre' in which the board represented a pastoral landscape of the affections. Setting out from 'New Friendship', the players encountered such dead ends and hazards as 'The Lake of Indifference' and 'The Sea of Danger' on the three alternative routes leading to tenderness.
5. '*Renaud et Armide*': Cocteau's play, an elegant but slightly florid tragi-romance in rhyming couplets.
6. 'Roger Leenhardt': Leenhardt was a member of the jury at Tours.
7. 'Jeanne Allard': Jeanne Allard played the leading role in *Le Bel Indifférent*.
8. 'Jacquot my friend': Referring to the title of Queneau's novel, *Pierrot mon ami*. *Odile* is also a novel by Queneau, who wrote the commentary to *Le Chant du Styrène*.
9. 'brilliantly mounted': *monté*, in French, means both 'edited' and 'mounted'.
10. 'Bossuet': Jacques Bénigne Bossuet (1627–1704), French prelate renowned for his funeral orations and generally regarded as one of the masters of French prose.

53: Jean Rouch Wins the Delluc Prize
Arts 701, 17 December 1958.

Jean Rouch entered the cinema by way of a series of documentaries about Africa made as the Director of the Service Cinématographique at the Musée de l'Homme (the ethnological museum in Paris). His first shorts (1946–56) were strictly documentary, recording African customs, tribal circumcision rites, rain-making ceremonies, etc. Gradually becoming interested in film-making as such, however, he began to season his reality with a careful dose of fiction. In *Moi, un Noir* (his first feature if one discounts both *Jaguar*, which was edited and shown years later, and *Les Fils de l'Eau*, which was a collection of four shorts), the colourful fantasy-existence in which his African characters see themselves as Edward G. Robinson, Dorothy Lamour and Eddie Constantine, is set off against the hopeless, dead-end nature of their lives. Two years later, with *La Pyramide humaine*, Rouch took another step towards *cinéma-vérité* by throwing together two groups of pupils from an African school – white and coloured – who did not normally mix after school hours, and then testing the friendly relations which were quickly established by asking both groups to enact – and react to – a fictional story in which one of their number is drowned.

Since the principles of *cinéma-vérité* have always obsessed Godard in his work – 'The cinema is truth twenty-four times a second' – his enthusiasm for Rouch is self-explanatory.

1. '*Je suis un Noir*': The film was finally titled *Moi, un Noir*.

54: The Ten Best Films of 1958
Cahiers du Cinéma 92, February 1959.

55: *Pourvu qu'on ait l'Ivresse*
Arts 706, 21 January 1959.

This was Jean-Daniel Pollet's first film, a short about the desolating boredom of suburban dance-halls made while he was doing his military service. When he made his first feature *La Ligne de Mire* in 1959–60, Pollet (born 1936) was the youngest member of the Nouvelle Vague and the butt of jokes from professionals in the film industry since *La Ligne de Mire* was widely reputed to be an amateur's folly, wasting some forty million old francs on material which could not be edited into a film. Never actually released, *La Ligne de Mire* was planned as a sort of manifesto towards a new cinema, but those who have seen it seem generally in agreement that it was an unmitigated disaster. (It is given a comradely plug by Godard later in this volume, as is *Méditerranée* (1964), a film in which half a dozen shots are permutated for some fifty minutes.)

With *Paris vu par* . . . (1964), in which he did the Rue Saint-Denis episode about an encounter between a timid young man and a businesslike prostitute, Pollet revealed a distinct talent for quiet, witty observation; but in *Une Balle au coeur* (1965), he again let ambition get the better

of him and weighted a straightforward thriller down with metaphysical overtones. His two most recent films, *Tu imagines Robinson* (1968) and *L'Amour c'est gai, l'amour c'est triste* (1969) (the former continuing the stylistic search of *La Ligne de Mire* and *Méditerranée*, the latter improving on the comic observation of *Paris vu par* . . .) may help at last to define Pollet's talent.

1. '*Nogent, Eldorado du Dimanche*': Marcel Carné's first film, a short made in 1930 about the popular Sunday resort on the banks of the Marne.
2. 'feature by Jean Boyer': *Les Vignes du Seigneur* (1958).

56: Take Your Own Tours
Cahiers du Cinéma 92, February 1959.

Despite his rhapsodies over the town of Tours in this article, Godard never did get around to filming the delights of the provinces. He ventured to Geneva for *Le Petit Soldat*, Marrakech for *Le Grand Escroc*, Rome and Capri for *Le Mépris*, and paradise for *Pierrot le Fou*; otherwise he remained the compleat Parisian film-maker until *Week-end* – by which time his vision of France, and everything else, had undergone a sea-change anyway. The only sign remaining of this early enthusiasm is a note in the first scenario for *Une Femme est une Femme* suggesting that the film might be set 'either [in] a provincial city like Tours, or a Paris *quartier* . . .'. Paris, of course, won.

The original title of this article ('Chacun son Tours') is another of Godard's beloved puns, playing on the fact that 'tour' means 'turn'. Thus, 'chacun son tours' means 'turn and turn about' (or 'to each his own Tours/turn'). A further twist is added in the first line, since 'tour' also means 'trick'.

The first subtitle ('A Nous Deux, Tours') is an adaptation of the last line of Balzac's *Le Père Goriot*, where the student Rastignac, having at last got his foot firmly wedged in the doorway of high society, cries 'A nous deux, Paris!' The line following this title is an adaptation of the beginning of the commentary to Chris Marker's *Lettre de Sibérie* ('I write to you from a far country').

1. 'rue Washington snack-bars': At this time Godard, a frequent visitor to Jean-Pierre Melville's cutting- and projection-rooms in the rue Washington, was often to be seen in the snack-bar next door.
2. 'Claude Mauriac': Film critic of *Le Figaro Littéraire*.
3. '*Treichville*': i.e. *Moi, un Noir*.
4. '*Juvenile Passion*': A Japanese film, *Kuruttu Kajitsu* (1957), directed by Yasushi Nakahira.
5. 'prizes for quality': See section 46, note 1.
6. 'France Roche': French journalist, actress and novelist.
7. '*La Pointe courte*': Agnès Varda's first feature, independently made in 1954–55 before the Nouvelle Vague explosion, and already revealing the rather tiresome intellectualism for which Godard was later to criticize *Le Bonheur*.
8. 'cobbler make a shoe': In Jacques Demy's first short, *Le Sabotier du Val de Loire*, 1956.
9. '*Two Pennyworth of Hope*': Renato Castellani's *Due Soldi di Speranza*, a frenzied comedy about a penniless young couple who marry in the mistaken belief that money does not make for happiness.
10. 'Rohmer': Eric Rohmer wrote the note about *Le Bel Indifférent* accompanying the photograph Godard refers to.
11. 'Nicole Stéphane': Nicole Stéphane played the role of Elizabeth in *Les Enfants terribles*.
12. 'those bodies of twenty-year olds': See section 2, note 2.
13. 'Aragon's quatrain': See section 5, note.

57: Supermann: *Man of the West*
Cahiers du Cinéma 92, February 1959.

1. 'the tubercular book-lover': The actor in question is Royal Dano.

58: *Les Quatre Cents Coups*
Cahiers du Cinéma 92, February 1959.

1. 'Bernanos's humiliated children': There are several 'humiliated children' in Bernanos's novels, *e.g.* the mutinous schoolgirl suicide of *Nouvelle Histoire de Mouchette* (filmed by Bresson as *Mouchette*) but one of them is titled *Les Enfants humiliés*. 'Vitrac's children in power' refers to Roger Vitrac's Surrealist play, *Victor ou les enfants au pouvoir*, in which the nine-year-old hero, seven feet tall and endowed with adult intelligence, and his six-year-old girl-friend, are the only sane beings in an insane adult world. Jean-Pierre Melville filmed Cocteau's *Les Enfants terribles* in 1949. Children, of course, loom large in both of Jean Vigo's feature films: the rebel schoolboys in *Zéro de Conduite*, and the cabin-boy in *L'Atalante*. 'Rossellini's children' probably refers in particular to *Germany Year Zero* (see section 2, note 8).

59: *Le Vent se Lève*
Arts 708, 4 February 1959.

1. 'Loubignac': Jean Loubignac; like Yves Ciampi, and like the Emile Couzinet cited below, a director of routine commercial vehicles.
2. 'pass on, pass on, since all must pass': 'Passons, passons, puisque tout passe': from Apollinaire's poem *Cors de Chasse*.
3. 'The Wind is rising, . . . one must try to live': 'Le Vent se lève! Il faut tenter de vivre.' This is the first line of the last stanza of Valéry's poem *Le Cimetière Marin*.
4. 'big patronizing films and his Japaneseries': A reference to two earlier Ciampi films: *Un Grand Patron* and *Typhon sur Nagasaki*.
5. 'M. Teste': Valéry's famous creation in *La Soirée avec Monsieur Teste*: a character who embodies intellect to the exclusion of all other qualities.

60: *Faibles Femmes*
Arts 710, 18 February 1959.

Michel Boisrond made his début as a director in 1955 with a Brigitte Bardot vehicle, *Cette Sacrée Gamine*, and for a time seemed to specialize in films with aspiring starlets – Mylène Demongeot, Pascale Petit, Dany Robin, and Bardot twice again. Since then he has tried his hand at several genres – thriller in *Un Soir sur la plage* (1961), romance with pop stars in *Cherchez l'Idole* (1963), and French James Bond in *Atout Coeur à Tokyo pour OSS 117* (1966) – without revealing noticeable signs of personality.

1. 'weak women': i.e. *Faibles femmes*, released in Britain as *Women Are Weak*.
2. 'Roussin': André Roussin, a highly successful dramatist, specialist in light comedy and farce, best known in English for *The Little Hut*. Boisrond and Annette Wademant filmed his *Lorsque l'enfant paraît* in 1956. *Roussin* means 'cart-horse'.

61: *Le Bel Age*
Arts 711, 25 February 1959.

Like Eric Rohmer, Pierre Kast was some ten years older than the rest of the *Cahiers du Cinéma* group of directors, and had been making short films since 1949 when he directed his first feature, *Un Amour de poche* (1957). Witty and urbane in the best French eighteenth-century tradition of conversational gamesmanship, his films (e.g. *Le Bel Age*, 1959, *La Morte-saison des amours*, 1961, *Le Grain de sable*, 1964) have never received the attention they deserve: because they are *too* French, one would have said, except that Rohmer has just had a very considerable success with two films very much in the same style, *La Collectionneuse* and *Ma Nuit chez Maud*. Recently Kast has been working in television.

1. 'France Roche': France Roche also wrote a number of short films for Kast: *La Chasse à l'homme*, 1953; *A nous deux, Paris*, 1953; *Monsieur Robida, explorateur du temps*, 1954; *Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, architecte maudit*, 1954 (Ledoux was the architect of La Saline des Chaux, the unfinished 'ideal town' whose ruins are the strange and beautiful setting for *La Morte-saison des amours*); *Le Corbusier, architecte du bonheur*, 1956.

2. 'Claude Bernard-Aubert': Born in 1930, Claude Bernard-Aubert made his début in 1957 with the courageous *Patrouille de choc*, a film not only about the war in Vietnam, but incorporating newsreel footage of the war. It ran into considerable censorship trouble, as did his next film, *Les Tripes au soleil* (1958), a passionate but overblown plea against racial intolerance set in an imaginary South American country. His subsequent films have sunk into commercial routine.
3. 'Vian, Doniol-Valcroze, Pagliero, Esposito': Boris Vian, novelist and playwright, one of the best exponents of the Theatre of the Absurd, who died in 1959 at the age of thirty-nine; Jacques Doniol-Valcroze, co-editor of *Cahiers du Cinéma*, then actor and director; Marcello Pagliero, actor (*Rome, Open City*) and director (*Un homme marche dans la ville*); Gianni Esposito, actor (*French-Cancan, Paris Nous Appartient*).
4. 'The Cartel': The Cartel was an association formed in 1927 by four leading theatre directors in Paris: Gaston Baty, Charles Dullin, Louis Jouvet and Georges Pitoëff. It was a purely business arrangement, designed to leave complete artistic freedom to each company while offering financial advantages in that all four companies would advertise together, pool properties, exchange actors, and support each other in any disputes.
5. 'Giraudoux and his gardener': Giraudoux took several liberties with classical mythology in his play *Electre*, among them the character of a gardener (a part created by Louis Jouvet) – part poet, part philosopher – whom Aegisthus plans to marry to Electra in order to keep her out of the way.

62: *Le Petit Prof'*
Arts 711, 25 February 1959.

A scriptwriter since the mid-thirties, Carlo Rim became a director with the Fernandel comedy, *L'Armoire Volante*, in 1948. Godard said all there is to be said about his work in the original heading to this review, making a neat pun on the director's name: *Le Petit Prof' ne rime à rien* ('*Le Petit Prof'* is without rhyme or reason').

1. 'the tribulations of a Frenchman in France': Godard is referring to Jules Verne's novel *Les Tribulations d'un Chinois en Chine*. The film is about a Candide-like young man (played by Darry Cowl) who faces all crises with unshakeable equanimity, and after many trials and tribulations, still faces the future with equanimity.
2. 'fall asleep on your feet': A better joke in the original: 'dormir debout', literally 'to sleep standing up', means 'to bore one stiff' in certain contexts.

63: *Asphalte*
Arts 711, 25 February 1959.

A dull, plodding director, Hervé Bromberger made his first feature in 1948 and has since made a series of dull, plodding films, few of which have been seen in England or America. Among the titles are *Identité Judiciaire* (1950), *Les Fruits Sauvages* (1953), *Les Loups dans la Bergerie* (1959) and *Mort, où est ta victoire?* (1963).

64: *Les Rendez-vous du Diable*
Cahiers du Cinéma 93, March 1959.

Haroun Tazieff, the Polish geologist and explorer who has made volcanoes his speciality in the cinema, made several short films from material collected on various expeditions between 1952 and 1957. *Les Rendez-vous du diable* was his first feature-length film; in 1966, he made *Le Volcan interdit*.

1. '*Rappel à l'ordre*': Cocteau's first volume of 'poésie critique', published in 1926.
2. 'Monsieur Jourdain': The hero of Molière's comedy *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, who discovered to his amazement that he had been 'talking prose for the last forty years' without knowing it.
3. 'Villacoublay': Now a military aerodrome, to the south-west of Paris.
4. 'Phileas Fogg': The hero of Jules Verne's *Around the World in 80 Days*.
5. '*Le Petit Larousse*': An illustrated dictionary-cum-encyclopaedia.

6. '*Une Saison en enfer*': Rimbaud's greatest poem, written at the age of nineteen and possibly his farewell to literature (the dating of his work is uncertain).
7. 'how far they have the right to go too far': See section 48, note 3.
8. 'Drieu la Rochelle': Pierre-Eugène Drieu la Rochelle (1893–1945), a brilliant novelist and essayist. Noted for his Fascist political views, he edited the *Nouvelle Revue Française* under the German Occupation, and committed suicide after the Liberation of Paris in 1945.
9. 'Abel': Niels Henrik Abel (1802–29), a Norwegian mathematician, noted chiefly for his development of the theory of elliptical functions and algebraic equations; he proved that an algebraic solution of the quintic was impossible.
10. 'Cauchy': Baron Augustin Louis Cauchy (1789–1857), a French mathematician, renowned chiefly for his work on wave-propagation.
11. 'Yves Ciampi in the rising wind': Yves Ciampi's film, *Le Vent se lève*, is about a ship's captain (played by Curt Jurgens) who commits fraud for the sake of his demanding mistress, but subsequently makes noble amends. See section 59.
12. 'Félix Mesguisch': Félix Mesguisch, who worked with the Lumière Brothers, was in effect the cinema's first cameraman, along with Promio.
13. '*Lost Continents*': see section 72, note 6.

65: *La Loi*
Cahiers du Cinéma 93, March 1959.

At the time of the Congressional hearings during the McCarthy witch-hunting era, Dassin was sent to London to make *Night and the City* (1950) after defending a studio's right to purchase a novel by Albert Maltz (one of the Hollywood Ten) for him to film. After this Dassin did not work for five years, because, he claims, he was blacklisted. He has since worked mainly in France and Greece, sometimes with considerable commercial success (*Rififi* and *Never on Sunday*), but driving his critical reputation down almost to zero with the solemn message-touting of *He Who Must Die* or the foolish pretensions of such films as *Phaedra* and *10.30 p.m. Summer* (both starring his over-enthusiastic actress wife, Melina Mercouri). *Up Tight*, a reworking of Liam O'Flaherty's *The Informer* in terms of Black Power, with which he celebrated his return to American film-making in 1968, was equally overblown in both conception and execution.

Although Dassin's well-meaning social conscience wears its heart on its sleeve throughout his work, and the later extravagance and artistic yearnings can be seen straining at the leash in his early films (notably *Two Smart People* and *Night and the City*), a good case can be made that the Hollywood 'system' against which Dassin chafed was beneficial to his work rather than limiting. Certainly both *Brute Force* and *The Naked City* gained enormously from the 'realistic' conventions current in Hollywood at the time; while his best film, *Thieves Highway*, keeps its social theme, extravagant love-affair and touch of destiny beautifully controlled within the clearly defined limits of a Hollywood thriller.

1. '. . . London': i.e. *Thieves Highway, The Naked City* and *Night and the City*, respectively.
2. '*Touchez pas au Grisbi*': Becker's film about robbery and underworld warfare in Paris, which preceded Dassin's *Rififi* by a year.
3. '*Bob le flambeur*': Directed by Jean-Pierre Melville, 1955. Melville, who had been making New Wave films since 1947 – independent, low-budget features made exactly as he wanted and often innovatory in technique – is usually acknowledged as the spiritual father of the Nouvelle Vague, and his highly personal, poetic view of the Parisian underworld in *Bob le flambeur* undoubtedly influenced Godard when he came to make *A Bout de Souffle*. As a matter of fact, Godard makes two graceful acknowledgements of his debt in the film. It is Melville who plays the role of the celebrated novelist, Parvulesco, who is interviewed at the airport by Jean Seberg; and when Michel Poiccard fails to collect the cash he needs at the travel agency, he suggests borrowing it from Bob Montagné (the hero of *Bob le flambeur*), only to be told that Bob is in jail.
4. 'Montand': There is a mild play on words here in Godard's original: 'Montand, de mon temps, était mieux.'

66: *La Ligne de Mire*
Cahiers du Cinéma 93, March 1959.

1. '*Pourvu qu'on ait l'Ivresse*': See section 55.
2. 'his friend Pierrot': Queneau's novel *Pierrot Mon Ami* (1942).
3. 'apropos of Nice': Vigo's first film *A Propos de Nice* (1929), a documentary satire.
4. 'Diderot's theory': Although Diderot is remembered for his novels and philosophical essays rather than his plays, his theoretical writing on the theatre is of considerable importance for its influence on Lessing and, through him, on nineteenth-century drama as a whole: in particular, *Paradoxe sur le comédien* and *Essai sur la poésie dramatique*. As an exponent of bourgeois drama – didactic in intent and comprising a mixture of sentiment and virtue designed to appeal to middle-class audiences – Diderot's main concern was to bring the actor down from the regal pinnacle he occupied in classical drama to more familiar bourgeois reaches. But his insistence on ensemble playing, on a greater collaboration and understanding between actor and playwright, and (anticipating Brecht's theories) on a distantiation between the actor and the character he is portraying, remains unexceptionable today.

67: *Les Cousins*
Arts 713, 11 March 1959.

1. 'good-time girls': i.e. *Les Bonnes Femmes*, Chabrol's next film but one.
2. 'Bernard Evein': A New Wave art director who has collaborated regularly with Chabrol, Jacques Demy and Louis Malle, and also worked on such films as *Les Quatre cents coups, Une Femme est une Femme* and *Cléo de 5 à 7*.
3. 'double key': i.e. *A Double Tour*, Chabrol's next film.

68: *Moi, un Noir*
Arts 713, 11 March 1959.

1. 'Raoul Lévy': A French producer who earned a considerable reputation with films like *Et Dieu . . . créa la femme* and *Moderato Cantabile*, but whose ambition to rival Hollywood in extravagance eventually led him into severe financial difficulties – notably with *La Fabuleuse Aventure de Marco Polo* (1964), a film which was abandoned, started again with new cast and director, and turned out as a pathetically inadequate travesty of a Hollywood blockbuster. Shortly before his death in December 1966, he appeared as an actor in Godard's *Deux ou trois choses que je sais d'elle*, where he plays John Bogus, the rich American recently returned from Vietnam.
2. 'Céline . . . Audiberti': Both the novelist Louis-Ferdinand Céline and the playwright Jacques Audiberti were noted for their linguistic fantasy.
3. '*Les Statues meurent aussi*': A short film by Alain Resnais whose theme was that Western civilization is responsible for the decline of Negro art. It was seen at the Cannes Festival in 1953, but was subsequently banned by the French censor.

69: *La Tête contre les Murs*
Arts 715, 25 March 1959.
See also section 80.

1. '*La Première nuit*': Godard quoted the title of this short film incorrectly as *La Dernière nuit*.
2. '*I* is *another*': Rimbaud's 'Je est un autre' (letter to Paul Demeny of 15 May 1871).
3. 'the bizarre': This is the impossible word *insolite*, so beloved of French critics; meaning 'strange' or 'unusual', it is used to describe anything strange or fantastic, from Alice's adventures in Wonderland to the loves of King Kong by way of the bloodlust of the Vampire of Düsseldorf.

70: *Les Motards*
Arts 715, 25 March 1959.

Roger Pierre and Jean-Marc Thibault co-directed and scripted *La Vie est belle* in 1956. In the following year, Thibault directed *Vive les Vacances* from a script by Pierre. The pair appeared as actors in both films.

1. 'Rigadin': Charles Prince, known as Rigadin, was Max Linder's chief rival among the first film comedians, though much his inferior. He was known in England as Whiffles.

71: *Le Grand Chef*
Arts 715, 25 March 1959.

A prolific director of commercial vehicles, Henri Verneuil made his first feature (*La Table aux crevés*) in 1951, and gradually worked his way up to becoming one of France's top box-office directors, notably with a trio of films starring Jean Gabin – *Le Président* (1961), *Un Singe en hiver* (1962) and *Mélodie en sous-sol* (1962).

72: Africa Speaks of the End and the Means
Cahiers du Cinéma 94, April 1959.

1. 'Houphouet-Boigny': Félix Houphouet-Boigny, President of the Republic of the Ivory Coast, formerly Minister of Health for French West Africa and member of the De Gaulle Cabinet (1958).
2. 'para': Paratrooper.
3. 'Museum of Man': Rouch was at the time Director of the Service Cinématographique at the Musée de l'Homme (the ethnological museum in Paris).
4. 'Garine . . . Borodine': Characters in Malraux's novel, *Les Conquérants*. Garine, as Malraux describes him, is one of the adventurers who happened to be in Canton at the time of the Chinese revolution and stayed to 'try their luck or risk their lives'; he is 'a man *capable* of action'. Borodine is the man of action, a professional revolutionary who came to Canton with one purpose in mind.
5. 'Denis Marion': Author, journalist and film critic. He scripted *L'Espoir* with Malraux, and was assistant director on the film.
6. '*Lost Continent*': An Italian film, *Continente Perduto*, made in 1954 by Leonardo Bonzi, Mario Craveri, Enrico Gras, Francesco A. Lavagnino and Giorgio Moser, and dealing with the more exotic aspects of Borneo and the Malay Archipelago.
7. '*Bagatelles pour un massacre*': By Céline, published in 1937.
8. 'Tartarins of the bush and their lion-hunt': Rouch's film, finally completed in 1965, was called *La Chasse au lion à l'arc*, and was a documentary about an African tribe and their tradition of hunting lions armed only with a bow and (poisoned) arrows. Tartarin was the amiably boastful hero of several novels by Alphonse Daudet.

73: *A Time to Love and a Time to Die*
Cahiers du Cinéma 94, April 1959.

Douglas Sirk – like Delmer Daves but on a slightly higher level of intelligence – is a director of taste and talent who has spent a good deal of his film-making time doing salvage jobs on soap-operas and 'women's pictures'. Jean Collet (*Jean-Luc Godard*, Paris, Seghers, 1963) has neatly pinpointed Godard's liking for Sirk by juxtaposing two 'ostriches': the heroine of the 'remarkable little film set by the sea' cited but not named by Godard, and the heroine of *A Bout de Souffle* who echoes her by saying 'I try to close my eyes very tight to make everything go black, but I can never do it. It's never completely black.' The moment when the ostrich does finally open its eyes to gaze on the world in fear or wonderment is a recurring motif in Godard films, especially those which starred Anna Karina: Angéla watching old people in the streets in *Une Femme est une Femme*; Nana in the police-station in *Vivre sa Vie*; Odile's song in the Métro in *Bande à part*; Marianne's outburst in the car while listening to a news bulletin from Vietnam in *Pierrot le Fou* – all have suddenly become *aware*. One might also – a trifle fancifully, perhaps – see a sidelong homage to Sirk in Godard's own 'woman's' picture, *Une Femme Mariée*, where a juke-box blares out the Sylvie Vartan song, 'J'aime le ciné triste' ('I like sad films').

1. 'the little laundress': Nini in *French-Cancan*, who is the object of a despairing love from the heir to a mythical principality.
2. 'Autant-Lara's miserable film': Radiguet's novel *Le Diable au corps* was filmed by Claude Autant-Lara in 1947. Godard's original text reads: '. . . parce qu'il ne ressemble pas au triste film d'Autant-Lara, mais au roman de ce drôle de Radiguet'. He thus uses two complementary adjectives: *triste*=sad, *drôle*='funny'. But *triste* in this context has the more specific meaning of 'bad'.
3. 'a circus': Godard is referring to the Russian director Boris Barnet's *The Wrestler and the Clown*, and to Richard Brooks's *Battle Circus*.
4. 'Elsa': Elsa Triolet, wife of Louis Aragon. In 1942 Aragon published a volume of poems entitled *Les Yeux d'Elsa* ('Elsa's Eyes').
5. 'Rossellini': An interview with Rossellini was published in the issue of *Cahiers du Cinéma* in which this article appeared.
6. 'Lewis Milestone . . . Philip Dunne': In *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930) and *In Love and War* (1958) respectively.
7. 'ex-editor from UFA': Before going to Hollywood, Douglas Sirk, Danish by origin, worked for the German company UFA as both editor and director.
8. 'at Brienne': In Abel Gance's *Napoléon* (1926) there is a celebrated sequence of a snowball-fight involving young Bonaparte during his schooldays at Brienne. In order to heighten the visual impact of the battle, Gance experimented tirelessly with his camera, at one point even causing it to be thrown like a snowball.
9. 'Off with your pullover, Lise!': Godard's original, here literally translated, is a tolerable pun on Liselotte Pulver's name: 'Lise, ôte ton pullover.' An English punster might perhaps substitute a pneumatic joke based on the fact that in this film she was credited not as Liselotte, but Lilo Pulver.
10. 'all those René's who can't see clearly': Another pun, this time involving René Clair's name: '. . . à tous ces René qui n'ont pas les idées claires' (*clair*='clear' or 'clearly').

74: Boris Barnet
Cahiers du Cinéma 94, April 1959.

A Russian director curiously neglected in the West, Boris Barnet (1902–65) was a boxer when he was invited by Lev Kuleshov to join his famous experimental workshop, and made his début as an actor in Kuleshov's enchanting satire, *The Extraordinary Adventures of Mr West in the Land of the Bolsheviks* (1924). His own first film, *The Girl with the Hat-box* (1926), was also a light-hearted satire, and it was in comedy that Barnet was to do his best work. Even when he tackled the solemn subject of a small Russian community torn by war and revolution in *Okraina* (1933), the result is a beautifully controlled tragi-comedy, almost Chekhovian in atmosphere.

1. 'Ado Kyrou': A French film critic, Greek by origin. Contributing editor to the film magazine *Positif*, noted for his books on Buñuel, eroticism and Surrealism in the cinema, he has also made several short films and one feature, *Bloko* (1965).
2. '*Cinéma 59*': A film magazine published by the Fédération Française des Ciné-Clubs.
3. 'Le Nôtre': André Le Nôtre (1613–1700), a French architect and landscape-gardener, appointed by Louis XIV to lay out the park at Versailles, the gardens of the Trianon, Chantilly, Fontainebleau and Saint-Cloud, and the terrace at Saint-Germain. In Rome, he laid out the gardens of the Vatican and the Quirinal; in England, St James's and Kensington Gardens, and the park at Greenwich.

75: A Film-Maker is also a Missionary: Roberto Rossellini
Arts 716, 1 April 1959.

1. 'whose life he filmed': In *Francesco, Giullare di Dio*, 1949. In 1970, Rossellini was at last able to film his *Socrates*.

76: *Une Simple Histoire*
Arts 717, 8 April 1959.

Made for French television, *Une Simple Histoire* was Marcel Hanoun's first film, and won him the Eurovision Grand Prix at Cannes in 1959. Although the leading role is played by actress

Micheline Bezançon, and the soundtrack is very carefully composed to obtain Bressonian contrapuntal effects between the dialogue and the narration (the heroine recalls what happened as we watch it happen), the main stylistic impulse behind the film is neo-realism, as Godard suggests in citing Cesare Zavattini (the chief apologist and theorist of the Italian neo-realist movement) and André Bazin (whose theories of montage led him into the arms of neo-realism).

Love in the City (*Amore in Città*, 1954), produced by Zavattini and conceived by him as a series of documentary reconstructions of real happenings, contains episodes by Antonioni, Fellini, Lattuada, Lizzani, Dino Risi and Francesco Maselli. Not all the directors respected Zavattini's neo-realist principle, but Maselli's episode, *The Story of Caterina* (*La Storia di Caterina*), used the real-life protagonist to reconstruct a story of an unmarried mother who abandoned her baby, subsequently tried to reclaim it, and was turned over to the police by nuns looking after the child. Tried and condemned, she was acquitted after appeal.

Hanoun's second film, *Le Huitième Jour*, a tolerably banal romance starring Emmanuelle Riva and made under normal commercial conditions, left neo-realism far behind; and his subsequent films have become increasingly precious and pretentious, notably *Octobre à Madrid* (1966), a film about the impossibility of making a film, and *L'Eté* (1968), which rhymed a personal love-story with the student revolt in Paris of May 1968.

1. '16 mm . . . weapon of the future': In December 1963, Godard shot *Montparnasse-Levallois* on 16 mm as one of six sketches in the film *Paris vu par* . . . . In order to reduce costs and encourage experiment, all six sketches were shot on 16 mm film, subsequently blown up to 35 mm for normal distribution in cinemas. Although the results were fairly satisfactory, despite some loss in photographic definition, the experiment did not result in any significant change in production methods.
2. 'Jean Gabin': In Renoir's *La Bête humaine*, 1938.

77: Jean Renoir and Television
Arts 718, 15 April 1959.

1. '*Trois Chambres à Manhattan*': Eventually filmed by Marcel Carné in 1965, with Annie Girardot instead of Leslie Caron.
2. '*Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe*': This was, of course, made by Renoir, in the summer of 1959, using the same multiple-camera technique as described here.
3. 'R.T.F.': The French broadcasting company (Radio et Télévision Française).
4. '*Les Caprices de Marianne*': Alfred de Musset's play, which is constantly evoked in connection with *La Règle du Jeu*. As Renoir himself has said: 'What pushed me to make *La Règle du Jeu* was an ambition to treat a subject which would allow me to use the exterior forms of a French comedy of the eighteenth century. I was also a little bit influenced by Musset, but my ambition was to find again a certain elegance, a certain grace, a certain rhythm which is typical of the eighteenth century, French or English.'

78: Debarred Last Year from the Festival Truffaut will Represent France at Cannes with *Les 400 Coups*
Arts 719, 22 April 1959.

The title of this article refers to the fact that Truffaut, who had excoriated the Cannes Festival in his *Arts* column in both 1956 and 1957, was not officially invited as a critic in 1958. He attended anyway, and reviewed the Festival – not kindly – in a column signed 'François Truffaut, the only critic not invited to the Festival.' In 1959 he won the best direction prize at the Festival for *Les Quatre cents coups*. The Quai d'Orsay houses the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

1. 'Raoul Lévy': Cocteau's film, *Le Testament d'Orphée*, was ultimately produced by Jean Thuiller for Les Editions Cinégraphiques (1959).

79: *The Perfect Furlough*
Arts 719, 22 April 1959.
See also section 81.

1. 'Lamiel': The heroine of Stendhal's unfinished novel, a peasant girl who follows the advice of a Machiavellian doctor and climbs up the social ladder from lover to lover.
2. 'with Curt Jurgens': *This Happy Feeling*, 1958.
3. '*ampoule*': i.e. a light-bulb which Tony Curtis, masquerading as a page-boy in an hotel, is asked to bring as a replacement.

80: *La Tête contre les Murs*
Cahiers du Cinéma 95, May 1959.

La Tête contre les murs received almost as disappointing a welcome in England and America as it had in France. At least critics were respectful to this first feature by Franju, remembering him as the director of brilliant, challenging shorts like *Le Sang des bêtes* and *Hôtel des Invalides*; but his second, the haunting, ferociously tender *Les Yeux sans Visage*, was dismissed as a tasteless horror film. In his continuing quest for the beauty in terror, through *Thérèse Desqueyroux*, *Judex* and *Thomas l'Imposteur*, Franju remains one of the most underrated major talents in the modern cinema. See also section 69.

1. 'green card-holders': Accredited film critics in Paris are issued with a pass which entitles them to see films free, either in public cinemas or at special Press screenings.

81: *The Perfect Furlough*
Cahiers du Cinéma 95, May 1959.
See also section 79.

1. 'furbelows': A reference to Becker's film *Falbalas*, which is set in the world of *haute couture*.
2. 'cards': *Le Dernier Atout* means 'The Last Trump'.
3. 'Valéry-Larbaud': Particularly concerned with subtleties of language in his poetry, Valéry-Larbaud was very much a cosmopolitan; some of his literary essays were written in English and Spanish.

82: *Goha*
Arts 723, 20 May 1959.

This was Jacques Baratier's first feature after several years spent in making short films. Graced by a typically whimsical, poetic script by the playwright Georges Schehadé, it remains his best film: an artless fantasy, set in Tunisia, about a village simpleton (played by the then unknown Omar Sharif) who makes love to the neglected wife of a local dignitary, and then, shamed by the forgiveness of the man he has wronged, commits suicide. Although not without talent, Baratier's subsequent films seem to try too hard and achieve little more than wild and woolly lunges at an amalgam of farce, satire and poetic fantasy (e.g. *La Poupée*, 1962; *Dragées au poivre*, 1963; *L'Or du Duc*, 1965).

83: *India*
Cahiers du Cinéma 96, June 1959.

1. 'Truth is in all things, even, partly, in error': Godard was to repeat this Hegelian notion in *Vivre sa Vie*, where it is quoted by Nana in her conversation with the philosopher in the café.
2. 'Riemann and Planck': Max Karl Ernst Ludwig Planck (1858–1947), German physicist who initiated the quantum theory; Georg Friedrich Bernhard Riemann (1826–66), German mathematician who elaborated a system of non-Euclidean geometry.
3. 'In a future issue . . .': This article never materialized.

84: *Tarawa Beachhead*
Cahiers du Cinéma 96, June 1959.

1. 'at top speed': Godard's phrase was 'en quatrième vitesse', which means 'in top gear' but is also the French title of Aldrich's film *Kiss Me Deadly*.
2. 'tennis-player from *Too Much, Too Soon*': The actor in question is Ray Danton.
3. 'Gilles': From Drieu la Rochelle's novel of the same name, published in 1939.

85: *Orfeu Negro*
Cahiers du Cinéma 97, July 1959.

At the 1959 Cannes Festival, Truffaut won the best direction prize for *Les Quatre cents coups*, but the Palme d'or for best film went to Marcel Camus and *Orfeu Negro*. In the excitement surrounding the French renaissance that year, Camus somehow found himself annexed to the Nouvelle Vague, although he was then forty-seven, had been around for years as an assistant, and had already made a feature about the war in Vietnam, *Mort en fraude* (1957), distinguished only by the fact that it was (indirectly) about the war. The exoticism of *Orfeu Negro* brought instant commercial success, which Camus failed to repeat in another Brazilian epic, *Os Bandeirantes* (1960). His subsequent films – *L'Oiseau de paradis* (1962), *Le Chant du Monde* (1965) – have confirmed him as a film-maker of flair rather than talent.

1. '*Friendly Persuasion*': Godard uses the French title of Wyler's film, which is rather more pertinent: *Loi du Seigneur* (i.e. 'Word of God').
2. 'a quiet Frenchman': Referring, of course, to *The Quiet American*.
3. '*Madame Express*': The woman's section of the liberal French weekly, *L'Express*.
4. 'Zazie': The ten-year-old heroine of Raymond Queneau's novel *Zazie dans le Métro*, whose favourite expression is actually 'Mon cul' ('My arse').
5. 'Cukor . . . disguise his girls as Louis XV marquises': For the 'Ladies in Waiting' number in *Les Girls*.

86: *Une Femme est une Femme*: Scenario by Godard from an idea by Geneviève Cluny
Cahiers du Cinéma 98, August 1959.

As Godard says in the interview which follows, he filmed this scenario virtually word for word. Nothing is changed, except that he settled on Paris rather than Tours as a location, and the characters are now called Angéla, Emile and Alfred; the friend remains Suzanne.

1. '*Marie-Claire*': A French magazine, something like a cross between *The Ladies Home Journal* and *Paris-Match*.
2. 'If Jean Poiret plays the role of Paul': The part was, of course, played by Jean-Paul Belmondo, so this idea was dropped. Jean Poiret and Michel Serrault were noted for a music-hall duo act, and appeared together in a number of films.
3. 'Josette, he thinks, is infamous': Godard's original is an untranslatable pun, depending partly on Anna Karina's accented French: 'Il trouve que Josette est infâme. Non, dit-elle. Elle est une femme.'

87: The Ten Best Films of 1959
Cahiers du Cinéma 104, February 1960.

88: Frère Jacques
Cahiers du Cinéma 106, April 1960

Jacques Becker died on the morning of 21 February 1960, less than a month before the Paris première of his last film, *Le Trou*. (Molière died on stage while acting in his own last play, *Le Malade Imaginaire*, in 1673.) Like Renoir and Cocteau, Becker was one of the few 'elders' generally admired and respected by the Nouvelle Vague – in particular for his lovingly authentic portrayals of the sound and feel of life in Paris, whether period (the radiant intensity of *Casque d'or*) or contemporary (the airy spontaneity of *Antoine et Antoinette*, *Edouard et Caroline* and *Rue de l'Estrapade*.

Godard's article, published as part of a memorial tribute in *Cahiers du Cinéma*, is one of his most allusive and difficult to translate since it is composed almost entirely of evocative references to Becker's work. Caroline, the young wife of *Edouard et Caroline*, for instance, has a silly quarrel with her husband over a dress and refuses to accompany him to a soirée which is to be his big chance as an aspiring pianist. Although the film is a comedy, her emotion (she imagines their marriage is ruined) is as exact and poignant in its own way as the tragic end of *Casque d'or*, where Golden Marie watches from a window as her lover Manda climbs the scaffold to the guillotine.

L'Or du Cristobal (1939) was Becker's first film, repudiated by him since it ran into money troubles; taken over by another company, it was completed by Jean Stelli. Max is the ageing gangster played by Jean Gabin in *Touchez pas au Grisbi* (1954); Lupin is the gentleman thief, 1910-vintage, played by Robert Lamoureux in *Les Aventures d'Arsène Lupin* (1956). *Rue de l'Estrapade* (1953) was the third in Becker's 'trilogy' of airy comedies about the trials and tribulations of young married couples in Paris, featuring different characters but retaining the tone and style of *Antoine et Antoinette* (1946) and *Edouard et Caroline* (1951). D'Artagnan and the Three Musketeers crop up because Becker, at the time of his death, was planning a film of *Les Trois Mousquetaires*.

1. 'Italian style': Godard's phrase is 'à l'italienne', which refers, strictly speaking, to a rehearsal method in the theatre where the actors begin by reading the dialogue totally without expression, allowing characterizations and intonations to emerge more or less spontaneously. Renoir used this method of rehearsal, notably in *Boudu sauvé des eaux*, but Godard is probably referring to the free, *Commedia dell'Arte* inspiration of Renoir's films. Max Ophuls, of course, was born in Germany, but went to work at the Burgtheater in Vienna in 1926. He subsequently made three films set in Vienna – *Liebelei*, *Letter from an Unknown Woman* and *La Ronde*, but all his work, whether done in Germany, America or France, is marked by the Baroque splendour and bitter-sweet romanticism associated with the great days of Vienna before the First World War. Jean-Pierre Melville is noted for his devotion to America and the Hollywood film, and has transplanted the American gangster film to France with astonishing fidelity and yet complete individuality, notably in *Le Doulos* (1962), *Le Deuxième Souffle* (1966) and *Le Samourai* (1967). In 1958 he shot *Deux Hommes dans Manhattan* on location in New York, and in 1962 he again went to America for *L'Ainé des Ferchaux*, which is, in effect, a homage to the American landscape.
2. 'Bonnot's gang': 'La Bande à Bonnot' was an Anarchist gang led by Jules Bonnot which terrorized France in 1911 with a series of bank robberies and violent outrages. Godard became involved in a project to make a film about the gang in 1967, but finally decided against it because it was a period subject and, as he said, he was not a costume designer, and as he had not lived in that period, authenticity was impossible anyway. The film, entitled *La Bande à Bonnot*, was finally made by Philippe Fourastié.

89: *Le Petit Soldat*
Cahiers du Cinéma 109, July 1960.

90: The Ten Best Films of 1960
Cahiers du Cinéma 116, February 1961.

91: *Une Femme est une Femme*
Several copies of this ten-inch long-playing record were cut, but it was never released commercially – perhaps because the attempt to create a sort of *opéra parlé* of extracts from the dialogue was not particularly successful. Apart from Karina's song in the strip-club, and one or two self-contained scenes such as Belmondo's story of the girl and the telegrams, it consists mainly of snatches of dialogue interspersed with music from the film and with Godard's observations on it. These comments form the basic text of the script which follows: dialogue is quoted only to give the context in the film to which Godard's comments apply.

1. '*Design for Living*': The French title of Lubitsch's film, used by Godard, is more meaningful here: *Sérénade à trois*.
2. 'Let it go at that': Strictly speaking, Godard makes use of the line from Apollinaire here: 'Passons, passons, puisque tout passe.' See section 59, note 2.
3. '*Far from Rueil*': Raymond Queneau's novel, *Loin de Rueil*.
4. 'Anquetil': See note for section 113.
5. 'Renoir's marvellous film': *The Golden Coach*.
6. 'Chantal in Bernanos's novel': In *Le Journal d'un curé de campagne*.
7. 'each in twelve sober frames of mind': Godard's original phrase is 'sage comme douze

images'. In French, 'sage comme une image' (literally, 'prudent as a picture') is normally used of children, and means 'as good as gold'.
8. 'Chabrol is right': This presumably refers to Chabrol's article, 'Les Petits Sujets', published in *Cahiers du Cinéma* 100, in which Chabrol argues that there is no basic difference between 'big' and 'little' subjects, only in their treatment.
9. 'Musset': In addition to *Les Caprices de Marianne*, Musset wrote a play called *Un Caprice*.
10. 'I am a woman': See section 86, note 3.

92: The Ten Best Films of 1961
Cahiers du Cinéma 128, February 1962.

93: Interview with Jean-Luc Godard
Cahiers du Cinéma 138, December 1962.
Special Nouvelle Vague issue, by Jean Collet, Michel Delahaye, Jean-André Fieschi, André S. Labarthe and Bertrand Tavernier.

1. 'the Left Bank group': So-called not only because they lived on the Left Bank in Paris, but because their cultural background (literature, politics and the plastic arts) was very different from that of the film-oriented *Cahiers du Cinéma* group, comprising Godard, Truffaut, Chabrol, Rivette, Rohmer and Doniol-Valcroze.
2. '*Adieu Philippine*': Jacques Rozier's first feature.
3. 'Decoin': The veteran director Henri Decoin, whose films – e.g. *Les Inconnus dans la maison* (with Raimu, 1942), *La Vérité sur Bébé Donge* (with Gabin, 1951) – are competently made but reveal no individual personality.
4. 'Kyrou . . . *L'Observateur*': Ado Kyrou, critic of the left-wing film magazine *Positif*; *Le Nouvel Observateur* is the leading left-wing weekly.
5. 'F.L.N.': The Algerian National Liberation Front.
6. 'O.A.S.': Organisation de l'Armée Secrète – the terrorist organization of the European-Algerian extremists.
7. 'Salan': General Raoul Salan, the chief army spokesman against De Gaulle's Algerian policy, implicated in the 'Generals' Insurrection' in Algiers, April 1961; sentenced to death *in absentia* in July 1961, he was subsequently captured in Algiers and sentenced to life imprisonment in May 1962.
8. 'Subor': Michel Subor, who plays the role of Bruno, 'the little soldier', in *Le Petit Soldat*.
9. 'an inside seen from the outside': This question refers to *Vivre sa Vie* and the story told by one of the characters about the schoolgirl's essay on the hen which states the motif of the film: 'The hen is an animal which is composed of an outside and an inside. If one takes away the outside, there is the inside . . . and when one takes away the inside, there is the soul.'
10. 'We are living on the Champs-Elysées': The editorial offices of *Cahiers du Cinéma* used to be on the Champs-Elysées.
11. 'Oval Portrait': Edgar Allan Poe's story, *The Oval Portrait*, about an artist whose portrait of his wife became so perfect that, when it was completed, her life was transposed to the portrait and she died. It is read to Nana by the young man she loves (whose voice is dubbed by Godard himself) just before she is shot at the end of *Vivre sa Vie*.
12. 'Zavattini': Cesare Zavattini, Italian scriptwriter and critic, the theorist of the neo-realist movement. He collaborated with De Sica on *Sciuscia*, *Bicycle Thieves*, *Miracle at Milan*, *Umberto D*, etc.
13. 'De Broca who filmed it': As *Les Jeux de l'amour*, 1960.
14. 'The Hakims': *Eva* was made for Robert and Raymond Hakim by Joseph Losey in 1962 – with the interference Godard predicted, since the film was cut and the soundtrack altered against Losey's wishes.
15. '*La Chienne*': Both *Eva* and *La Chienne* (Jean Renoir, 1931) are about men obsessed to the point of self-destruction by a woman.
16. 'the death of Porthos': a reference to *Vivre sa Vie*, where Brice Parain describes the death of Porthos (from Dumas's *Twenty Years After*) to Anna Karina in the café: how he placed his bomb, lit it, ran away, and suddenly began to think, to wonder how it was possible for him to place one foot in front of the other . . . and, doubting, stopped running and so died. 'The first time he thought, he died as a result.'
17. 'Braunberger': As a producer, Pierre Braunberger's policy has always been to encourage young talent. Among his impressive list of productions: *Nana* (Renoir), *Un Chien Andalou* (Buñuel, Dali), *L'Age d'or* (Buñuel), *La Chienne* (Renoir), *Une Partie de campagne* (Renoir), *Van Gogh* and *Gauguin* (Resnais), *O Saisons, ô châteaux* (Varda), *Tirez sur le pianiste* (Truffaut), several shorts and *Vivre sa Vie* (Godard).
18. 'Losey and Antonioni': Robert and Raymond Hakim produced Antonioni's next film, *The Eclipse*.
19. 'a sort of Hunebelle thing': André Hunebelle, prolific director of absolutely routine commercial vehicles.
20. '*Un Singe en Hiver*': Directed by Henri Verneuil, dialogue by Michel Audiard, starring Jean Gabin and Jean-Paul Belmondo, 1962.
21. 'Are you going to make it in colour?': *Les Carabiniers* was made in black and white.
22. 'I'm also going to do a sketch': *Le Nouveau Monde*, in RoGoPaG.
23. '*Ubu Roi*': Godard never filmed Jarry's play.
24. '*Pour Lucrèce*': This project never materialized, but Godard did manage to use Giraudoux's line, 'Purity is not of this world, but once in ten years its light shines briefly', in another context (it was to have ended his projected film): it turns up as a linking title in *Masculin Féminin* ('La Pureté n'est pas/De ce monde/mais/Tous les dix ans il y a/en lueur/son éclair').
25. '*Cinq colonnes à la une*': A current affairs programme on French television.
26. 'Freda': Riccardo Freda, an Italian director who brought an excellent sense of visual style to what were essentially exploitation pictures – horror films, muscle-man epics, swashbuckling adventures. As in the case of Edgar Ulmer, the enthusiasts from *Cahiers du Cinéma* tended to overpraise Freda's talent – unless misled by his habit of signing his pictures with an English pseudonym into writing him off completely, as they did with his delightfully outlandish horror film, *L'Orribile Segreto del Dottor Hichcock* (1962).
27. '*L'Express*': The leading liberal Paris weekly.

94: The Ten Best Films of 1962
Cahiers du Cinéma 140, February 1963.

95: *Les Carabiniers* under Fire
Cahiers du Cinéma 146, August 1963.

No Godard film can be said to have had an easy-passage with critics in general, and too often his detractors have seized on the airy insistence in his interviews on day-to-day inspiration and improvisation to describe his films as crude, amateurishly put together, and lacking even rudimentary craftsmanship. This article, written in reply to the Parisian critics who attacked *Les Carabiniers* as though it were a personal insult, is one of the few occasions on which Godard revealed in detail just how painstaking his attention to detail really is.

1. '*L'Atalante*': Vigo's film opened at the Colisée cinema in Paris in September 1934.
2. '*Mourir à Madrid*': Frédéric Rossif's compilation film about the Spanish Civil War, made in 1962.
3. 'very ordinary everydayness': Godard ended this paragraph with an excellent, untranslatable joke. He wrote: 'C.Q.F.D. *Carabiniers* quel film dangereux.' 'C.Q.F.D.' ('*ce qu'il fallait démontrer*') is the French equivalent of 'Q.E.D.'. The second part of the sentence means, '*Carabiniers* what a dangerous film.'
4. 'Zanuck': Darryl Zanuck, whose film about the D-Day invasion of Europe in the Second World War, *The Longest Day*, was completed shortly before shooting began on *Les Carabiniers*.
5. 'Schola Cantorum': The college of music, dance and the dramatic arts in the rue Saint-Jacques, Paris.
6. 'the battle of *Hernani*': Fought at the Comédie-Française in 1831 on the first night of Victor Hugo's play, *Hernani*, torch-bearer of the new Romantic movement in the theatre.
7. 'HUMA': The affectionate diminutive by which the Communist newspaper *L'Humanité* is known in France.

96: *Le Mépris*
Cahiers du Cinéma 146, August 1963.

1. 'altering a few details': Actually, Godard did make one change crucial to one's understanding of the nature of the conflict between Paul and Camille. Since the film is no longer a first-person narrative by Paul, one is no longer obliged to believe him when he says he was delayed in getting to Prokosch's flat; Camille *may* be right in thinking that he arrived late deliberately in order to let Prokosch make a pass at her.
2. 'obscurity': A pun on Lumière's name: *lumière* means 'light'.
3. '*Laramiesque*': i.e. Anthony Mann's *The Man from Laramie*.
4. 'Musset': Another play on words and titles: Camille is the heroine of Musset's play *On ne badine pas avec l'amour* (literally, 'One does not trifle with love')
5. 'In another town': Rimbaud actually wrote 'Ailleurs' ('Elsewhere'), which I have mistranslated in order to keep Godard's reference to Minnelli's *Two Weeks in Another Town* (French title: *Quinze Jours Ailleurs*).
6. 'In search of Homer': A reference, of course, to Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu* (Godard's original reads, *A la recherche d'Homère*).

97: Dictionary of American Film-Makers
Cahiers du Cinéma 150–151, December 1963–January 1964.

Richard Brooks
Godard's reference to Sergeant York neatly rounds out his description (in his review of Nicholas Ray's *Hot Blood*) of Brooks and his patently sincere but somewhat pedestrian films as schoolmasterish. Alvin C. York was the all-American (and real-life) hero of Howard Hawks's *Sergeant York* (1941): a modest Tennessee farmer who got religion when lightning struck his gun from his hand as he was about to wreak vengeance on an enemy, but nevertheless became a hero of the First World War, killing a lot of Germans in order to 'stop the killing'.

Stanley Kubrick
1. 'Melville . . . Reichenbach': See section 46, and section 65, note 3. Although there is no need to quarrel with Godard's praise of *Lolita* for revealing 'America . . . better than . . .', it should perhaps be noted that the exteriors for the film were shot in England.

Richard Leacock
Curiously enough, Godard's later development as a 'revolutionary' film-maker was to lead him straight back into the arms of Leacock, by way of the argument that artistic effects – or direction – get in the way of the message: in *Un Film comme les autres* (1968), for instance, Godard simply let the camera run on, filming a discussion between people hidden in long grass. He even went to America at about this time to make a film, as yet uncompleted, called *One American Movie* for the Leacock-Pennebaker Company.

At the time of writing, however, Godard's films shared with *cinéma-vérité* a preoccupation with reality and a desire to seize truth off-guard, but diverged sharply in both their use of fiction to illuminate fact, and in being shaped from beginning to end not by chance but by Godard's artistic personality.

Godard's distrust of the 'truth' revealed by *cinéma-vérité* proper is neatly illustrated in *Le Grand Escroc*, the short sketch he made in 1963. An amiable attack on the practitioners of *cinéma-vérité*, it demonstrates that the heroine, a camera reporter called Patricia Leacock, is no better than her subject, a confidence trickster passing out counterfeit money to poor Arabs. Neither tells the truth, says Godard; both are fakes. Less than a year later, however, Godard was to have his sketch *Montparnasse-Levallois* photographed by Albert Maysles, the pioneer *cinéma-vérité* cameraman. Godard wrote the dialogue, the actors found the gestures under his supervision, and Maysles improvised with his camera. The result rather bears out Godard's distrust; though charming, the sketch is one of the thinnest and least satisfactory of his films.

2. 'if the intention is hazy': cf. the slogan from *La Chinoise*, 'We must confront vague ideas with clear images.'
3. 'Magic-Marker to annotate his rushes': This refers to Chris Marker, a film-maker noted for the brilliant editing, perfectly matching objective fact and subjective comment, of his documentary reportages; and to Jean Rouch, one of the pioneers of *cinéma-vérité* in France with his African documentaries.

Jonas Mekas
The New York 'school' Godard refers to never really existed, except in the sense that in the mid fifties, along with the professional breakaway from Hollywood in search of lower costs, greater freedom and more realism, a number of independent film-makers emerged to create the beginnings of the New York underground movement. Among them were Morris Engel (*Lovers and Lollipops*, 1955, *Weddings and Babies*, 1958); Robert Frank (*Pull My Daisy*, 1958, *The Sin of Jesus*, 1960); Lionel Rogosin (*On the Bowery*, 1954, *Come Back Africa*, 1958), and – directors of the two most successful films of the time – John Cassavetes (*Shadows*, 1960) and Shirley Clarke (*The Connection*, 1960). Jonas Mekas, who had made the appallingly pretentious *Guns of the Trees* in 1961, collaborated with his brother Adolfas to make the rather more acceptable comedy *Hallelujah the Hills* in 1962.

4. 'Ramuz': See section 47, note 3.

Orson Welles
The performance in Hamburg which Godard refers to is of *Time Runs*, Welles's own adaptation of *Faust*, which he staged in France and Germany in a double bill with another of his own plays, *The Unthinking Lobster*.

Billy Wilder
Throughout this article, Godard uses the French titles of Wilder's films, causing no translation problems in the references to *Double Indemnity*, *One, Two, Three* and *Irma la Douce*. But the article should really begin, 'After seven years of reflection', since the French title of *The Seven Year Itch* is *Sept ans de réflexion*. *Ariane*, retained in translation to preserve the analogy with Marilyn (from *The Seven Year Itch*), is the French title of *Love in the Afternoon* (and of the Claude Anet novel on which Wilder's film was based). Jack Lemmon and Shirley MacLaine were the stars of *Irma la Douce*, Joseph LaShelle the cameraman, and Alexandre Trauner the art director.

98: The Ten Best American Sound Films
Cahiers du Cinéma 150–151, December 1963–January 1964.

99: *Orphée*
Cahiers du Cinéma 152, February 1964.

This article was one of seven ('Le Chiffre Sept' – poem by Cocteau) published by *Cahiers du Cinéma* in memory of Jean Cocteau, a film-maker who is quoted more frequently than any other in Godard's work. Although Cocteau's true spiritual heirs in the cinema are Franju and Melville, Godard's admiration for him resulted in two films in which his presence is almost tangible.

In *Le Petit Soldat*, when Bruno first announces that he has changed his mind about working for the O.A.S., it is of course a copy of *Thomas l'Imposteur* that the O.A.S. agent pulls from his pocket and obliquely threatens Bruno with by reading Cocteau's description of the death of Thomas. But the real Cocteau influence comes, equally obliquely, from his first novel, *Le Grand Ecart*, about a boy who attempts to commit suicide because he has been betrayed in his first love. Not only is Bruno Forestier named after the Jacques Forestier of *Le Grand Ecart*, but Bruno's character (his refusal to carry out his mission for no very good reason – just because – even though he knows his refusal is tantamount to suicide) bears a marked resemblance to the Jacques who broods about 'that Englishman who killed himself after writing: *Too many buttons to button and unbutton. I shall kill myself.*'

Five years later in *Alphaville*, Godard was to create, in Lemmy Caution, his own Orphée to do battle against the living death of technology. Although the parallels between *Orphée* and *Alphaville* should not be taken too far, there are many striking resemblances: between Orphée's search for Cégeste, and Lemmy's for Harry Dickson; between the poems Orphée hears on the radio, and the aphoristic questions Lemmy is fed by Alpha 60 ('What is the privilege of the dead?'

– 'To be no longer alive'); between Orphée's victory over Death through the recovery of his poetic powers, and Lemmy's use of poetry to destroy Alpha 60. Moreover, Godard openly acknowledges his debt on several occasions. When Alphaville is destroyed, for instance, people stagger down labyrinthine corridors or cling blindly to the walls like the inhabitants of Cocteau's 'Zone de la mort'; and at the end, Lemmy urges Natacha, like Eurydice, not to look back.

1. 'Poligny, Billon, Delannoy': Strictly speaking, Cocteau did not direct a film between *Le Sang d'un poète* in 1930 and *La Belle et la Bête* in 1945. *Le Baron fantôme* (1943) was directed by Serge de Poligny, with Cocteau as dialoguist and actor. For *L'Eternel Retour* (1943), Jean Delannoy was credited as director, but Cocteau was very closely involved. *Ruy Blas* (1947), with script by Cocteau, was directed by Pierre Billon.
2. 'if the world becomes a dream . . .': This quotation from Novalis reappears in *Bande à part*.
3. 'a young boy': Jean-Pierre Léaud, star of *Les Quatre cents coups*.
4. 'France Roche': In her capacity as columnist for *France-Soir*.
5. 'the old angel Heurtebise': Although Heurtebise is not described as an angel in the film *Orphée*, he was in the original play. This, however, is probably a reference to Cocteau's poem *L'Ange Heurtebise*, where Heurtebise appears not simply as a guardian angel, but as the poet's genius and inspiration.
6. 'light years': Again, an impossible play on words: Godard wrote, 'pas mal d'années Lumière'.

100: The Ten Best Films of 1963
Cahiers du Cinéma 152, February 1964.

101: *Méditerranée*
Cahiers du Cinéma 187, February 1967.

This article about Jean-Daniel Pollet's short feature, *Méditerranée*, was written in 1964 but not published until the film was shown publicly at the Quartier Latin cinema.

102: *La Femme Mariée*
Cahiers du Cinéma 159, October 1964.

103: Questionnaire to French Film-Makers
Cahiers du Cinéma 161–162, January 1965.

1. 'an experimental art-house adventure-story': Godard began shooting *Alphaville* in January 1965. The phrase he uses to describe it is 'un film d'aventure, d'art et d'essai'. The Association Française des Cinémas d'Art et d'Essai was founded in 1955. It is in effect a federation of cinemas, both in Paris and the provinces, whose purpose is the propagation of the art of the cinema (old and new), not only through selective programming but through debates, exhibitions and publications. There were sixty-four member cinemas in 1965, just over half of them in Paris, and a monthly magazine, *Art et Essai*, commenced publication in April 1965.
2. 'advance on receipts': There is no system of 'quality' prizes in France for feature films, which are subsidized on net box-office receipts; so that if a film is commercially successful it will benefit by a higher subsidy. However, there is also a system of advances on receipts: a certain number of films each year, selected by committee either at script stage or upon completion, are recommended to the Minister for Cultural Affairs for an advance.
3. 'C.S.T.': Commission Supérieure Technique du Cinéma: an organization set up in 1944 to lay the basis for a rational organization of technical matters relating to the cinema, and to assure, protect and improve the technical quality of films.

104: The Ten Best French Films since the Liberation
Cahiers du Cinéma 161–162, January 1965.

105: The Ten Best Films of 1964
Cahiers du Cinéma 165, February 1965.

106: Studying François
L'Avant-Scène du Cinéma 48, May 1965.

These impressions of Truffaut were written as a prefatory note to the published script of *La Peau Douce*, the film in which Françoise Dorléac, as the air hostess who led Desailly astray, 'slips off her stockings in an inn in Normandy'.

Among the references: Jean Vigo, one of Truffaut's great heroes, his *Zéro de Conduite* being cited in *Les Quatre cents coups* (the schoolmaster losing his crocodile of boys) and in *Jules et Jim* (the newspaper with a banner headline reading 'Je vous dis merde!') . . . Gaumont, the distributor who cut *L'Atalante*, threw in a pop song, and issued it as *Le Chaland qui passe* only days before Vigo died. . . . Tilda Thamar, an Argentinian actress, but a French film, *L'Ange rouge*. . . . The Avenue de Messine was at that time the home of the Cinémathèque Française, and Frédéric Rossif was for three years the chief usher. He has since made a number of compilation films: *Le Temps du ghetto* (1961), *Mourir à Madrid* (1962), *Les Animaux* (1964), *La Révolution d'Octobre* (1967). Most of the action of *Les Quatre cents coups*, incidentally, takes place around the Place Clichy, 'the most beautiful square in Paris'.

107: Montparnasse-Levallois
Cahiers du Cinéma 171, October 1965.

1. 'Belmondo told this story': Belmondo, in the café scene with Anna Karina, tells the story of a girl who posts letters to her two lovers and, realizing she has muddled the envelopes, rushes to ask them to ignore the contents; but she hadn't muddled the envelopes after all, and is thrown out by each lover in turn.
2. 'the Queneau side of life': Like Godard's heroes in *Bande à part*, the characters in Raymond Queneau novels (e.g. *Odile, Pierrot mon ami, Zazie dans le Métro*) are eccentrics living in a strange private world which is at once absolutely real and complete fantasy; and like Godard, Queneau's main preoccupations are to explore the limits to which dislocation of language and genres may be pushed, and to discover the poetry latent in ordinary, everyday scenes and things.
3. 'Rouch . . . sketch': Rouch's sketch for *Paris vu par . . .*, entitled *Gare du Nord*, is about a young couple quarrelling in their tiny, noise-ridden flat as the camera clings doggedly to them, then follows the wife as she storms out, takes the lift downstairs, and goes out into the street for a chastening encounter with a suicidal stranger. It was filmed in one take (though there does seem to be one cut) in order to enhance the obsessive, claustrophobic aspect of the story.
4. 'Maysles': In collaboration with his brother David, Albert Maysles had just made the *cinéma-vérité* reportage on film producer Joe Levine, *Showman*. Previously, both had worked for Drew Associates (i.e. Robert Drew, Richard Leacock and D. A. Pennebaker).

108: *Pierrot* my friend
Cahiers du Cinéma 171, October 1965.

Although *Pierrot le Fou* is based – with surprising fidelity – on Lionel White's novel *Obsession*, its imagery is also shaped and coloured, as Godard suggests, by Rimbaud's *Une Saison en enfer*. Indeed, the untitled prose poem with which *Une Saison en enfer* begins – where Rimbaud describes his flight from the 'festivity' of his past life, and how 'one evening I held Beauty on my knees and found her bitter' – might almost be a scenario for the film.

Rimbaud's description of his subsequent revolt against law and order ('I summoned the executioners so as to die gnawing the butts of their guns. I summoned the scourges so as to bury myself in sand and blood') parallels Pierrot's experience with the gun-runners; and like Pierrot, Rimbaud hesitates at the moment of death, thinking of reclaiming the key to 'the former festivity'. And, of course, in addition to the various references throughout the film to Rimbaud's poem (in particular, the reiterated cry of 'Chapter Eight . . . A Season in Hell'), it ends with four lines from another Rimbaud poem, *L'Eternité*, which is quoted in full in *Une Saison en enfer*:

Elle est retrouvée.	It is found again.
Quoi? – L'Eternité.	What? – Eternity.

C'est la mer allée	It is the sea gone
Avec le soleil.	With the sun.

1. 'François': i.e. François Truffaut.
2. 'blossoms broken . . . north of Sweden': Godard is referring to Griffith's *Broken Blossoms*, Rouch's *La Chasse au lion à l'arc*, Bergman's *The Silence*.
3. 'L.T.C.': Laboratoires Tirages Cinématographiques: the projection- and cutting-rooms of the Laboratoires Franay at Saint-Cloud. Picasso's *Mystère* is Clouzot's film about his work, *Le Mystère Picasso* (1956).
4. 'Sainte-Beuve': Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve (1804–69), an influential French man-of-letters whose literary criticism was firmly based on a scientific approach, whereas Proust's writing was completely subjective.
5. 'Nicolas de Stael': See section 109, note 17.
6. 'Pavese': Cesare Pavese (1908–50), an Italian novelist arrested in 1935 for his anti-Fascist opinions. His work became increasingly concerned with the vanity of human existence and obsessed with the idea of self-destruction. He finally committed suicide.
7. 'Yang Kwei Fei': Mizoguchi's film *The Empress Yang Kwei Fei* (1955).
8. 'Mark Dixon': the hero of Preminger's *Where the Sidewalk Ends* (1950).
9. 'Claudel's East': Paul Claudel, the mystic poet and playwright, travelled extensively in the East during his period of diplomatic service in China from 1895 to 1909, and it recurs frequently in his work, usually as a symbol of Purgatory. *Le Soulier de Satin*, for instance, is a play which takes the world as its stage, and uses the period of the Counter-Reformation as a background to its attempt to define the total experience, physical and spiritual, of Catholicism. Thus the advance of The Cross is shown to be pushing back the frontiers of Hell (Protestantism) and Purgatory (the Far East).

109: Let's Talk about *Pierrot*
Cahiers du Cinéma 171, October 1965.
Interview by Jean-Louis Comolli, Michel Delahaye, Jean-André Fieschi and Gérard Guégan.

1. 'Musset's Camille': The heroine of Musset's play *On ne badine pas avec l'amour* ('One does not trifle with love').
2. '*L'Assassinat du Duc de Guise*': The famous 'art' film of 1908, directed by André Calmettes and starring Charles Le Bargy of the Comédie Française. It was the first production of Le Film d'Art, a company formed with the misguided purpose of conferring a new dignity on the cinema by imposing literary subjects and great stage actors.
3. 'Boulevard Haussmann': As prefect of the Seine department in the 1860s, Baron Haussmann carried out a great re-planning programme in the city of Paris by driving the 'grands boulevards' through its centre. The Boulevard Haussmann is named after him.
4. 'Borges': The Argentinian writer, Jorge Luis Borges. Godard prefaces *Les Carabiniers* with a quote from him: 'The longer I live, the more I tend towards simplicity. I use the most hackneyed metaphors. Basically, that is what is eternal, the stars are like eyes, for instance, or death like the sun.'
5. '*Clarté*': A Communist students' magazine which revived for the 1960s the name of a similar periodical edited by Aragon in the thirties.
6. 'Moulin': Jean Moulin, sent into France by the Free French in 1942 to coordinate the Resistance movement. The first head of the National Council of Resistance, he was arrested, tortured and killed in June 1943.
7. 'Maquis de Glières': One of the largest Resistance groups in France during the German Occupation. The plateau de Glières (Préalpes de Savoie) was the scene of a famous battle when 20,000 German troops clashed with 400 resistants on March 25, 1944.
8. '*Il Terrorista*': Gianfranco De Bosio's first film, *Il Terrorista* (1963), was set in Venice during the Second World War and had a very interesting script which tackled a difficult subject: the conflicting political interests which split the Italian resistance movement into several opposing groups.
9. 'Fouchet': Christian Fouchet, Minister of Education from 1963 to 1967.
10. 'Contamine': Claude Contamine, Director-General of French radio and TV, 1964–67.

11. 'Bertolucci . . . Shell': Bernardo Bertolucci, after completing his feature *Prima della Rivoluzione*, made a series of three television films about petrol, each between 40 and 50 minutes in length: *La Via del Petrolio*, (i) *Le Origini*, (ii) *Il Viaggio*, (iii) *Attraverso l'Europa*.
12. 'Gilles Grangier': Routine French director: he has made some of the hammiest Fernandel and Jean Gabin vehicles in recent years.
13. 'Jean-Georges Auriol': A French critic and scriptwriter. Auriol (1907–50) was the founder of *La Revue du Cinéma*, predecessor of *Cahiers du Cinéma*.
14. 'Mendeleev': Dmitri Ivanovich Mendeleev (1834–1907), the Russian chemist who formulated the periodic law of atomic weights, and predicted the discovery of new elements.
15. 'Chauvet and Charensol': Two 'old guard' critics: Louis Chauvet is the film critic of *Le Figaro*, Georges Charensol of *Les Nouvelles Littéraires*.
16. 'Rissient': Pierre Rissient, film critic turned film distributor; author of a book on Joseph Losey.
17. 'Nicolas de Stael': A Russian painter of the modern French school, Nicolas de Stael settled in Paris in 1932. He committed suicide in 1955 at the age of forty-one.
18. 'Juross': Albert Juross, who plays the role of Michelange in *Les Carabiniers*.

110: Speech delivered at the Cinémathèque Française . . . Thanks to Henri Langlois
Le Nouvel Observateur 61, 12 January 1966.

'Henri Langlois', Godard once wrote in another context, 'has written a non-stop film called La Cinémathèque Française'. In fact Langlois is the Secrétaire-Générale of the Cinémathèque Française (the film archive and museum in Paris), which he founded in 1936 with Georges Franju and Jean Mitry. His magpie attitude towards film preservation – he never *selects*, just collects – has resulted in one of the richest collections in any film archive in the world; and his eclectic, eccentric programming of films at the Cinémathèque has been acknowledged as one of the most important formative elements in their careers by a great many of the younger French film-makers.

1. 'more light': The French for 'light' is 'lumière', which Godard links with the name of Auguste and Louis Lumière, and also with the fact that Paris is known as 'La Ville Lumière' (The City of Light).
2. 'Minister for Cultural Affairs': André Malraux.
3. 'Minister of Finance': Presumably Michel Debré, who succeeded Valéry Giscard d'Estaing as Minister of Finance on 8 January 1966.
4. 'objectives': i.e. lenses.
5. '*Bouvard et Pécuchet*': See section 12, note 2.
6. 'Bardèche and Brasillach': Maurice Bardèche and Robert Brasillach published a history of the cinema (*Histoire du Cinéma*) in 1935.
7. 'Anonymous French cameraman': Félix Mesguisch; see section 64, note 12.
8. 'Bouguereau': Adolphe Bouguereau (1825–1905), a noted Academic painter of his day.
9. 'voices from their silent obscurity': Godard is referring to Malraux's great work of art history, *Les Voix du Silence*, the first part of which is called 'Le Musée Imaginaire'.
10. 'Albertine and Gilberte': From Proust's novel *A la recherche du temps perdu*, the last volume of which is called *Le Temps retrouvé*.
11. 'Durand-Ruel and Vollard': Two celebrated Parisian art dealers. Durand-Ruel launched the Impressionists; Vollard, the School of Paris, arranging the first exhibitions of Cézanne, Matisse and Picasso.
12. 'Vigo . . . Gaumont . . . Stiller . . . Garbo . . . Stroheim': Vigo's last film, *L'Atalante*, was heavily cut, re-edited and re-titled by Gaumont shortly before Vigo's death in 1934. Mauritz Stiller, who had given Garbo her first starring role in *The Legend of Gösta Berling* and was responsible for her engagement by M-G-M, was to have directed her in her Hollywood début; instead, Irving Thalberg entrusted *The Torrent* to Monta Bell. Von Stroheim, of course, was notorious for his quarrels with the Hollywood system.

111: The Ten Best Films of 1965
Cahiers du Cinéma 174, January 1966.

112: Letter to the Minister of 'Kultur'
Le Nouvel Observateur, 6 April 1966; reprinted in *Cahiers du Cinéma* 177, April 1966.

The stimulus for this article was partly a gradual disillusionment with Malraux himself (see section 36, note), and partly fury over Malraux's passive share in the absurd banning of Rivette's *La Religieuse* (based on Diderot's 18th century novel) in order to safeguard so-called religious sensibilities.

1. 'Your master': Presumably de Gaulle, since Malraux was his Minister for Cultural Affairs.
2. 'Frey, Pompidou': Georges Pompidou was Prime Minister at the time; Roger Frey was the Minister of the Interior.
3. 'imprisoned in the Bastille': Diderot was imprisoned for four months in 1749 after the publication of his *Lettre sur les aveugles*.
4. '*Femme Mariée*': Godard's film, originally titled *La Femme Mariée*, was threatened with censor trouble. After the intervention of Malraux, it was passed, but the title had to be changed to *Une Femme Mariée* (*A* Married Woman rather than *The* Married Woman) so that it would be seen to be dealing with a particular case and not with Frenchwomen in general.
5. 'Peyrefitte': Alain Peyrefitte, then Minister of Information.
6. 'U.N.R.': The Gaullist political party: Union pour la Nouvelle République.
7. 'Charonne and Ben Barka': Eight people were crushed to death in Charonne Métro station in Paris during a police charge against demonstrators on 8 February 1962. Mehdi Ben Barka, the Moroccan nationalist and former Speaker of the House of Assembly, was kidnapped in Paris in October 1965 while involved in planning the Havana Three Continents conference; his disappearance remains a mystery.
8. 'Péguy': Charles Péguy (1873–1914), a French poet whose work gradually moved from anti-clerical socialism to Catholic mysticism.

113: One Should Put Everything into a Film
L'Avant-Scène du Cinéma 70, May 1967.

The starting-point of *Deux ou trois choses que je sais d'elle*, as Godard remarks, is the 'replanning of the Paris area' under Paul Delouvrier. In 1961, Delouvrier was appointed by De Gaulle as head of a new Government department (the Délégation Générale au District de la Région de Paris) set up to plan for the future of the Paris region in all its aspects. By 1963, he had prepared a document estimating the region's population and industrial growth for the rest of the century, and during the next year projects were launched under a four-year programme. Rejecting the previous suggestion for a decentralization policy because it would inhibit economic growth, Delouvrier instead made the basis of his plan the creation of eight new towns on the perimeter of the region, each with its own social, cultural and commercial centres. The 'Grands Ensembles' which are the particular object of Godard's attack in the film are similar new towns, haphazardly created in the suburbs – e.g. Sarcelles, started in 1956 – with high-rise housing developments into which Parisian slum-dwellers have been transferred.

The Edouard Leclerc referred to by Godard is the 'French supermarket king', a young grocer from Brittany who revolutionized business methods in France when, after a long battle from 1949 to 1955, he succeeded in imposing the principle of retail price-cutting.

Jacques Anquetil, five times winner of the 'Tour de France', is one of France's greatest racing cyclists. He retired in 1969.

114: My Approach in Four Movements
L'Avant-Scène du Cinéma 70, May 1967.

1. 'Ponge': see section 4, note.
2. 'Merleau-Ponty': Maurice Merleau-Ponty, French Existentialist philosopher.

115: Letter to my Friends to Learn how to Make Films Together
L'Avant-Scène du Cinéma 70, May 1967.

116: Manifesto
Press-book for *La Chinoise*, August 1967.

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The Films of Jean-Luc Godard

(for complete filmographical details see *Jean-Luc Godard* by Richard Roud, Cinema One series No. 1)

1959 *A Bout de Souffle* (*Breathless*)
1960 *Le Petit Soldat* (*The Little Soldier*)
1961 *Une Femme est une Femme* (*A Woman is a Woman*)
1962 *Vivre sa Vie* (*It's My Life/My Life to Live*)
1963 *Les Carabiniers* (*The Soldiers/The Riflemen*)
Le Mépris (*Contempt*)
1964 *Bande à part* (*The Outsiders/Band of Outsiders*)
Une Femme Mariée (*A Married Woman*)
1965 *Alphaville, une étrange aventure de Lemmy Caution*
Pierrot le Fou
1966 *Masculin Féminin* (*Masculine Feminine*)
Made in USA
Deux ou trois choses que je-sais d'elle (*Two or Three Things I Know About Her*)
1967 *La Chinoise, ou plutôt à la Chinoise*
Loin du Viêt-nam (*Far From Vietnam*)
Week-end
1968 *Le Gai Savoir*
Un Film comme les autres
One Plus One (*Sympathy for the Devil*)
One American Movie (uncompleted)
1969 *Communications* (uncompleted)
British Sounds (*See You at Mao*)
Pravda
Vent d'Est (*East Wind/Wind from the East*)
Lotte in Italia (*Struggle in Italy*)
1970 *Jusqu'à la Victoire* (*Palestine Will Win*)
1971 *Vladimir et Rosa* (*Vladimir and Rosa*)

Short films:
1954 *Opération Béton*
1955 *Une Femme coquette*
1957 *Tous les Garçons s'appellent Patrick*
1958 *Charlotte et son Jules*
Une Histoire d'eau

Sketches:
1961 *La Paresse*, sketch in *Les Sept Péchés Capitaux* (*Sloth* in *The Seven Capital Sins*)
1962 *Le Nouveau Monde*, sketch in *RoGoPaG*
1963 *Le Grand Escroc*, sketch in *Les plus belles Escroqueries du monde*
Montparnasse-Levallois (sketch in *Paris vu par . . .*)
1967 *Anticipation, ou l'An 2,000*, sketch in *Le plus vieux Métier du monde*
L'Enfant prodigue, sketch in *Vangelo '70*

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